



Legal Aid of Nebraska

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State Needs Assessment



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I. INTRODUCTION

Legal Aid of Nebraska provides free civil legal services to Nebraska residents who qualify under federal poverty guidelines, or meet other program-specific qualifications. The organization is dedicated to promoting dignity, hope, self-sufficiency and justice through high-quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn.

The more than one-quarter-million Nebraskans who qualify for Legal Aid generate about 70,000 legal problems each year. With its current staffing and resources, Legal Aid is able to handle only 14.4 percent of these cases.

Legal Aid previously received most of its funding from the federal government; however, now only one-third of the organization's annual budget is funded by the Legal Services Corporation. Because the need for legal services far outweighs the available resources, Congress has required recipients of the federal funds to establish a procedure to determine the priority of those legal needs so that the limited funds can be used according to the priorities established.

In order to prioritize the needs, Legal Aid of Nebraska commissioned Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates to complete a Needs Assessment. The year-long study was conducted in three phases. Phase I was a telephone survey of Nebraska households with residents who qualify for legal services according to the poverty guidelines. Phase II was a written survey of Legal Aid of Nebraska Board members and staff, judges and attorneys, and human services providers. Phase III was a series of 10 focus groups held across the state to gather the views of minority and rural populations that might not have been adequately represented in the telephone survey.

Included in this report are explanations of the methodologies, an executive summary, conclusions and recommendations, details of findings for each phase of the study, response totals and percentages for each question, a compilation of open-ended responses and copies of the survey instruments. In addition, cross-tabulations of responses to key questions in the

telephone survey are included.

Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates wishes to thank all of the Legal Aid staff members and professionals who helped in completing the Needs Assessment. We are grateful for the efforts of Director of Resource Development Margaret Lageschulte, Director of Litigation & Advocacy Dave Pantos and Executive Director Douglas German. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with Legal Aid of Nebraska and to be of assistance in the firm's important work.

II. METHODOLOGIES

Phase I

Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates conducted a telephone survey with a random sample of 1,200 households across the state of Nebraska to determine their legal needs and legal use patterns. The households qualify for Legal Aid according to federal poverty guidelines, or had incomes just slightly above the eligibility guideline. For each of the six geographic areas where Legal Aid has offices, 100 calls were made to individuals with an annual household income of less than \$25,000, and 100 calls to individuals with an annual household income of between \$25,000-\$37,000.

Initial survey questions asked members of this population about their challenges in general without specifically asking about legal challenges. Later in the survey, respondents were asked questions about legal needs. Legal Aid of Nebraska's intent was to first gain understanding of respondents' challenges in general in order to more fully understand the needs of the population it serves

The total sample of 1,200 represents a maximum sampling error rate of +/- 2.8% at a 95% confidence level. The error rate increases for smaller subsamples, such as results for each geographic area. For responses based on 200 completed interviews into each area, the maximum sampling error rate is +/- 6.9%. And, for the 600 completed interviews by income level (under \$25,000 and \$25,000-\$37,000), the sampling error rate is +/- 4.0%.

Because the error rate increases as smaller segments are drawn from the survey, care must be taken to avoid overstating findings based on data from very small samples. For example, the accompanying cross-tabulations may, in some instances, contain very small numbers of respondents in a particular segment. While the information may be of interest, it should not be considered as necessarily representative of the subpopulation as a whole.

Information was obtained in 8-10 minute telephone interviews completed in January and February 2006. The questionnaire was designed by Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates to reflect

the objectives of Legal Aid of Nebraska. The questionnaire was pretested to ensure that it was worded clearly and that respondents understood the intent of the questions. In developing the questionnaire, Leslie Kline Lukas drew upon the American Bar Association survey so that the format and questions used in Nebraska would be similar to studies done elsewhere in the nation.

Phase II

Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates sent written surveys to Legal Aid of Nebraska board members and staff, a random sample of judges, attorneys and human service providers. The table below illustrates the number of surveys that were distributed and the number and percentage of surveys that were completed and returned. No guarantee was made or implied that any specific number of surveys would be completed and returned.

	Surveys Sent	Surveys Completed/ Returned	Percentage
Board/Staff	76	33	43%
Judges	207	51	25%
Attorneys	467	34	7%
Human Service Providers	250	85	34%

The questionnaires were written by Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates in cooperation with Legal Aid of Nebraska. Legal Aid of Nebraska supplied Leslie Kline Lukas with the lists. The surveys were sent by U.S. Mail and respondents were asked to return their completed questionnaires to Leslie Kline Lukas by April 15. All multiple choice and open-ended responses on the completed surveys were tabulated.

Phase III

To gather information from Nebraskans who might not have been reached with a telephone survey, Legal Aid of Nebraska organized focus group discussions across the state.

Ten focus groups with members of the Hispanic, Sudanese, African American, Native American and rural populations were facilitated by Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates. The

discussions took place from June through December 2006, and were held in Scottsbluff, North Platte, Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha. An exception was the rural Nebraska group. Because of logistical difficulties in assembling this group, the Bancroft office of Legal Aid of Nebraska distributed questionnaires at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island in September.

A total of 122 individuals participated in the focus groups. The groups ranged in size from a low of six to a high of 22 participants. The groups included women, men, young, elderly, single, married, individuals who are U.S. citizens, and those who are not. The groups were scheduled to be held at times and locations that would be most convenient for participants. For sessions that were held during mealtimes, a catered meal was provided. Each participant received a \$15 stipend in gratitude for giving time to this study. Legal Aid of Nebraska attorneys attended many of the focus group discussions, and they remained following the discussions to answer questions posed by participants.

A discussion outline based on the telephone survey instrument was used to guide focus group discussions.

A note on assessment of need for a lawyer: Respondents among the populations served by Legal Aid of Nebraska were asked whether they felt they had needed an attorney within the past year. Responses represent self-assessments of need and do not necessarily reflect whether there was in fact such a need.

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key findings from Phase I, telephone survey:

- The respondents said the biggest challenges they face are issues related to health, finances, unemployment and taxes.
- More than half of the respondents (52.4 percent) are aged 65 and older, and 50.2 percent are married, facts to be considered when analyzing the results. *See graphs on Pages 22 and 25.*
- A substantial majority of the respondents (96.8%) have not used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska.
- More than one-half (63.5%) are not aware of the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska.
- Over one-half (60.2%) said they did not know if they are eligible for free legal services, even though they met income eligibility guidelines.
- A little more than one-half (58.8%) were not aware of any free civil legal services for individuals who cannot afford a lawyer.
- More than 80 percent of respondents (83.5%) said they have not needed a lawyer in the past year.

Key findings from Phase II, written survey of Legal Aid of Nebraska Board and staff, judges and attorneys, and human services providers:

- These groups' perceptions of challenges faced by low-income Nebraskans differ somewhat from what the low-income individuals themselves say. An area of agreement was personal finance (and related housing challenges).

- All of these groups mentioned divorce, domestic relations and issues related to children as challenges faced by low-income Nebraskans.
- While there is some disagreement as to why, there is overwhelming agreement among these groups that Legal Aid of Nebraska is not adequately funded to carry out its mission.
- All of these groups listed the dedication and competence of its attorneys and staff as Legal Aid of Nebraska's greatest strength. They likewise were unanimous in citing not enough attorneys as the firm's greatest weakness.
- Fully 75% of the human services providers said that they had referred their clients to Legal Aid of Nebraska.

Key findings from Phase III, focus groups among Hispanic, African-American, Sudanese, Native American and rural populations:

Participants in the focus group discussions said they struggle daily with challenges that stem primarily from lack of financial resources. While distinctive themes emerged in discussions with each group, certain issues came up repeatedly among all. Later in this report is a section that includes information specific to each of the 10 groups.

Themes common to all or many of the focus groups:

- Financial difficulties, and related issues such as employment, education, access to proper medical care, were mentioned most often when participants were asked to name the major challenges they face.
- Among focus group participants who said they had used Legal Aid of Nebraska services, the overwhelming majority said they were "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the firm and the work it did on their behalf.
- General awareness of Legal Aid of Nebraska, the services it provides, and how to access those services, is relatively low. In most of the groups, only a few or one of the

participants had known about Legal Aid of Nebraska prior to being invited to participate in the focus group. Overall, fewer than half (46 out of 122) of the focus participants had heard of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to attend the focus group.

- A frequent target of criticism among focus group participants was a public assistance system that seems to provide no incentive for poverty-stricken individuals to find employment and work to improve their financial lot. The reason is that public assistance is withdrawn too quickly after a recipient finds work. If keeping a job means fewer resources for the family over the short term, participants said, there is little reason to find a job.
- Members of racial minority groups who participated in the focus groups frequently mentioned covert and overt racism in their communities' law enforcement, criminal justice, education and economic systems. In some groups, emphasis on this factor was more pronounced.

Addressing the Causes of Poverty

As a follow-up to questions about life challenges and the causes of poverty, focus group participants were asked to talk in general about solutions, and (later in the discussion) about what Legal Aid of Nebraska could do to address the challenges and causes. Some of the responses, such as “lowering taxes” or campaigning for affordable insurance premiums, were clearly outside of the mission of Legal Aid of Nebraska. Responses proposing ideas where Legal Aid of Nebraska might be capable of some practical action are summarized here:

General Solutions

- Reform public assistance programs and personnel that are not responsive to the needs of the people they serve.
- Establish practical job-training and placement services in regions of the state where unemployment is high.
- Provide low-cost English as a Second Language programs in communities with large populations of non-English speakers. This is an urgent need for the Sudanese in Grand Island.

Legal Aid of Nebraska

- Intensify efforts to communicate throughout Nebraska the availability of Legal Aid of Nebraska services, many of which are aimed at addressing the issues that surfaced in the focus groups. Stage additional seminars on topics such as financial planning, navigating the public assistance system and farm finances.
- Clarify for the eligible population situations where individuals might need to consult an attorney.
- The AccessLine is a valuable resource in connecting Nebraskans with Legal Aid. Consider enhancements to access once infrastructure is in place to handle additional cases.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Aid of Nebraska gets high marks from both clients who have taken advantage of its services as well as judges, attorneys and human services providers. A majority of clients (76.3%) who received services from Legal Aid of Nebraska said they were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the firm. Judges, attorneys and human services providers consistently listed caring, skilled and effective attorneys as Legal Aid of Nebraska’s greatest strength.

Respondents to the written survey named some Legal Aid staff members as exemplars of the high quality of professional work that is done throughout the organization. Listed alphabetically, those named are Annette Farnan, Pat Ford, Jennifer Gaughn and Kay Strong.

Responses in all three phases of the Needs Assessment indicate that there is a significant unmet need for Legal Aid of Nebraska’s services. In addition, the telephone survey indicates that many people assume they would not qualify for Legal Aid services when, in fact, they meet the income guidelines. This presents a quandary for Legal Aid of Nebraska. Ramping up communication about all aspects of the firm and its services will enlighten many who qualify for Legal Aid services. However, Legal Aid does not have the resources to meet all of the needs of those who currently seek the firm’s services.

Our recommendations, which are intended to address that quandary, fall into three general areas: fund development , communication and program management:

Fund Development

Build a compelling and effective case for support of Legal Aid of Nebraska and use it to increase philanthropic support and expand the firm’s donor base.

- Legal Aid of Nebraska enjoys an excellent reputation among those who use its services. Leverage this success in fund development communication, positioning the firm as a highly competent and successful advocate for its clients.
- Develop a “grateful client” giving program. Gifts of all sizes will be important to the future success of Legal Aid of Nebraska’s fund development program. This potential source of gifts might not yield huge gifts, but the fact that previous clients are willing to give back could serve as a powerful example to motivate individuals with the capacity to make larger gifts.

Communication

Educate the population that is eligible for Legal Aid services about the firm and the kinds of help it can provide.

- Develop a flyer that explains what a lawyer can do to help with health, financial, unemployment and tax issues; what services are available from Legal Aid, and how to contact the nearest Legal Aid firm.
- Evaluate effectiveness of messaging in Yellow Pages and other advertising: Is it possible to include information about eligibility in the ads?
- Create a series of workshops and seminars on why, when and how individuals should go to Legal Aid for help. Target audiences for the workshops: Population eligible for services, healthcare and human services providers, attorneys.
- Distribute pertinent results of this study, and any other research performed for Legal Aid of Nebraska, to the news media across the state. Continue a regular cycle of news releases about Legal Aid services and the population that is served by Legal Aid.
- Conduct a media tour of Nebraska, offering interviews on the results of this study and on Legal Aid services as a whole.
- Focus communication efforts on areas where population is dense and utilization of Legal Aid is especially low (e.g., North Platte, where only one person interviewed had used Legal Aid of Nebraska).

Program Management

Develop outreach and collaborative programming with agencies that touch the population that is eligible for Legal Aid services.

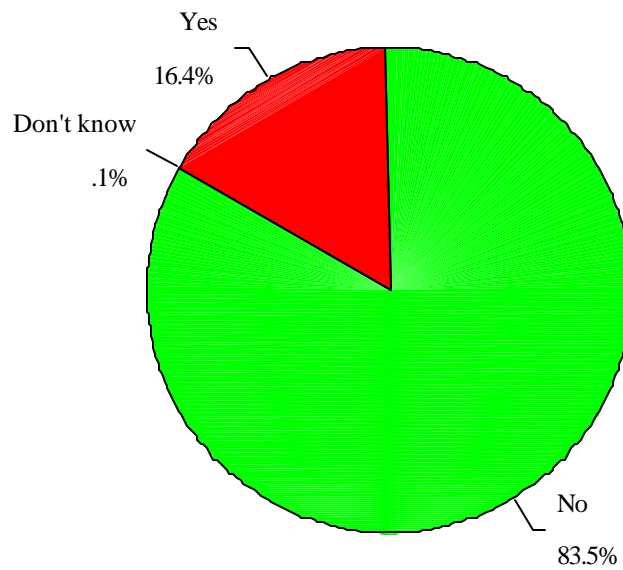
- Work with willing healthcare providers to distribute information about Legal Aid services to individuals who are eligible to receive Legal Aid assistance.
- Distribute a Legal Aid information flyer to firms and agencies that supply financial services to the population that is eligible for Legal Aid.
- Partner with educational institutions, either as places where flyers may be made available, or where workshops and seminars may be presented as part of adult and continuing education programs.

V. DETAIL OF FINDINGS

Phase I – Telephone Survey of Population Eligible for Legal Aid Services

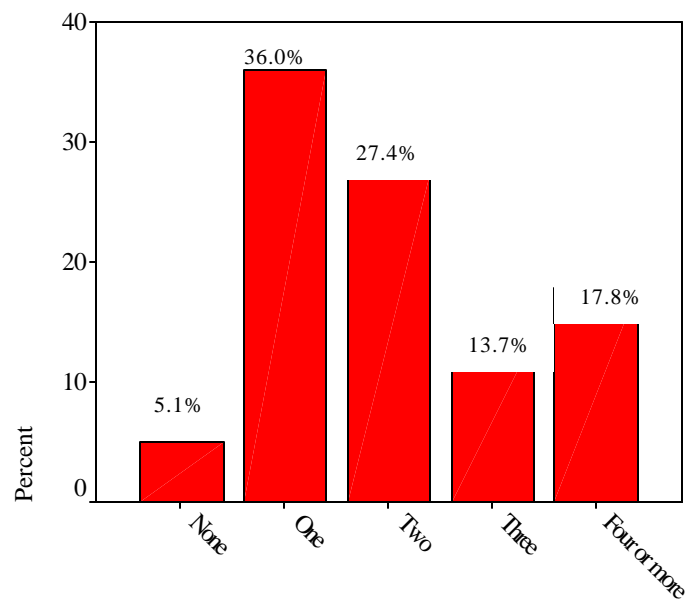
- When interviewees were asked to name three of the biggest challenges faced by their family, the most mentioned responses were issues related to health (27.9%), finances (26.8%), unemployment (9.9%) and taxes (8.8%). All responses were tabulated.
- Next, respondents were read a list of challenges and were asked if anything on the list changed their decision of their top three challenges. The challenges most mentioned were taxes (12.5%), health care (11.8%) and personal finance (11.1%). All responses were tabulated.
- Respondents were asked, of the three biggest challenges they mentioned, which is the biggest challenge. The most mentioned responses were personal finance (20.6%) and health care (20.6%). Many other challenges were mentioned. They can be found in the totals and percentages section of this report.
- The following graph shows how many interviewees said they have not needed a lawyer in the past year for something that did not include a crime. Note that this information is based on a self-assessment of need and does not necessarily indicate whether there was in objective fact a need for legal representation.

Needed a Lawyer in the Past Year
(based on Self-Assessment)



- The following graph shows how many times those who believed they needed a lawyer for non-criminal legal problems in fact saw a lawyer in the past year.

Saw a Lawyer in the Past Year
(based on 197 respondents)



- Of the respondents who had seen a lawyer in the past year for non-criminal legal problems, 89.3% said their needs were handled by the lawyer, while 8.6% said their needs were not handled and 2% said they did not know. Respondents mentioned a variety of different lawyers who handled their needs.
- The following table illustrates the responses when interviewees who said their non-criminal legal needs were not met were asked how many times in the past year their needs were not met.

Number of Times Needs Not Met
(based on 21 respondents)

	n	%
One	12	57.1%
Two	4	19.0%
Four or more	3	14.3%
Don't know	2	9.5%

- The reasons given by respondents for why their non-criminal legal needs were not met by a lawyer are shown in the following table, arranged in descending order.

Reasons Why Legal Needs Not Met
(based on 21 respondents)

	n	%
Handled it on my own	4	19.0%
Situation was resolved	4	19.0%
A lawyer would not have helped	2	9.5%
Lawyers are too expensive	2	9.5%
Other	6	28.6%
Don't know	3	14.3%

- When asked if they have ever been placed on a waiting list when trying to get help from a free legal aid program, nearly all of the respondents (96.4%) said no. Another 3.1% said they had and 0.5% said they did not know.
- The following table shows the responses when those who have been placed on a waiting list were asked how long they waited. Responses are in descending order.

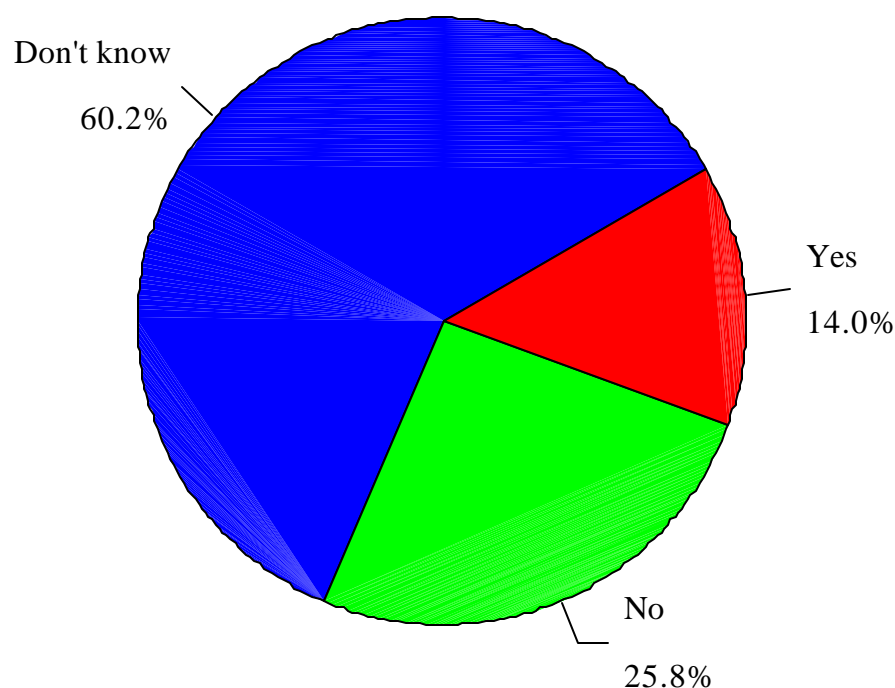
Length of Time on Waiting List

(based on 32 respondents)

	n	%
6 months	8	21.6%
3 months	4	10.8%
1 year	3	8.1%
2 years	3	8.1%
1 week	2	5.4%
1 month	2	5.4%
2 months	2	5.4%
Still waiting	2	5.4%
10 weeks	1	2.7%
9 months	1	2.7%
4 years	1	2.7%
9 years	1	2.7%
10 years	1	2.7%
No wait	1	2.7%
Don't know	5	13.5%

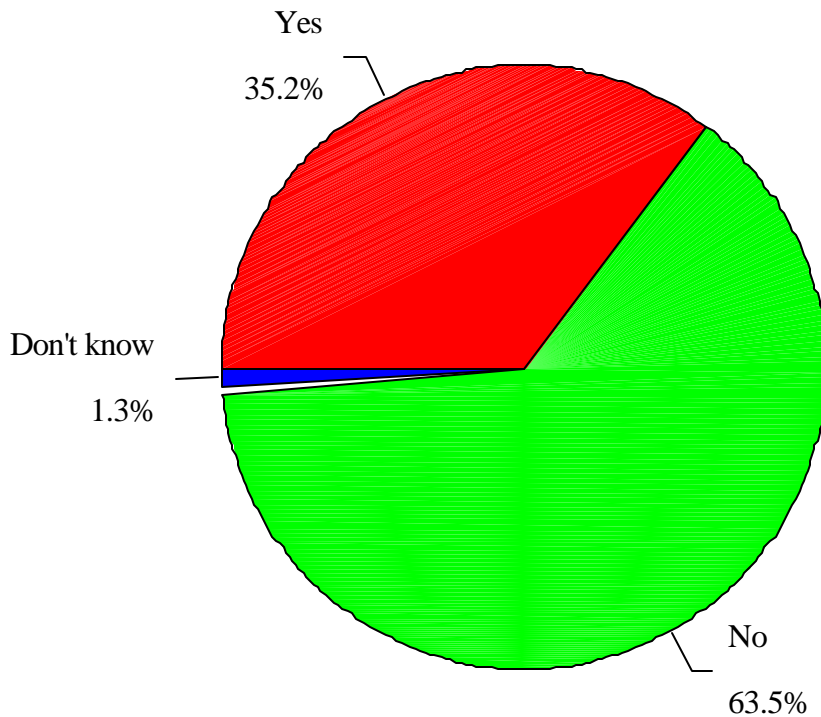
- When asked if they are aware of a service in their area that makes referrals to lawyers, 64.4% of the respondents said they were not aware, while 30.9% said they were and 4.7% said they did not know.
- More than one-half of the respondents (58.8%) said they are not aware of any free civil legal services for people who can't afford a lawyer. Another 36.5% were aware and 4.7% said they did not know.
- The following chart illustrates the responses when interviewees were asked if they are eligible for free legal services.

Eligible for Free Legal Services



- Of those who said they are not eligible for free legal services, the majority (87.1%) said the reason is because they make too much money. Another 12.3% said they did not know why they are not eligible. (All of the respondents are in fact eligible).
- Nearly three-fourths of the respondents (73.1%) said they are not aware of any mediation services in their area that work out an agreement between people involved in a dispute, while 20.2% said they are aware. The remaining 6.8% did not know.
- When asked if they are aware of a small claims court where ordinary people can go to have their cases heard, 70% of the respondents said they are, while 27% said they are not and 3% said they did not know.
- The following chart illustrates the responses when interviewees were asked if they are familiar with the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska.

Familiar With Services of Legal Aid of Nebraska



- The majority of the respondents (96.8%) said they have never used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska. The other 3.2% said they had.
- The reasons most mentioned by respondents for why they have not ever used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska were because they have had no need (61.1%), they have never heard of the organization (12.3%), they handled the situation on their own (8.1%) and they did not know they were eligible for services (5.4%). The other responses are listed in the totals and percentages section of this report.
- A variety of responses were given by interviewees regarding the most recent time they used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska. Those responses are listed in the totals and percentages section.
- The table below shows the responses when interviewees were asked which legal services

Legal Aid of Nebraska provided to them most recently.

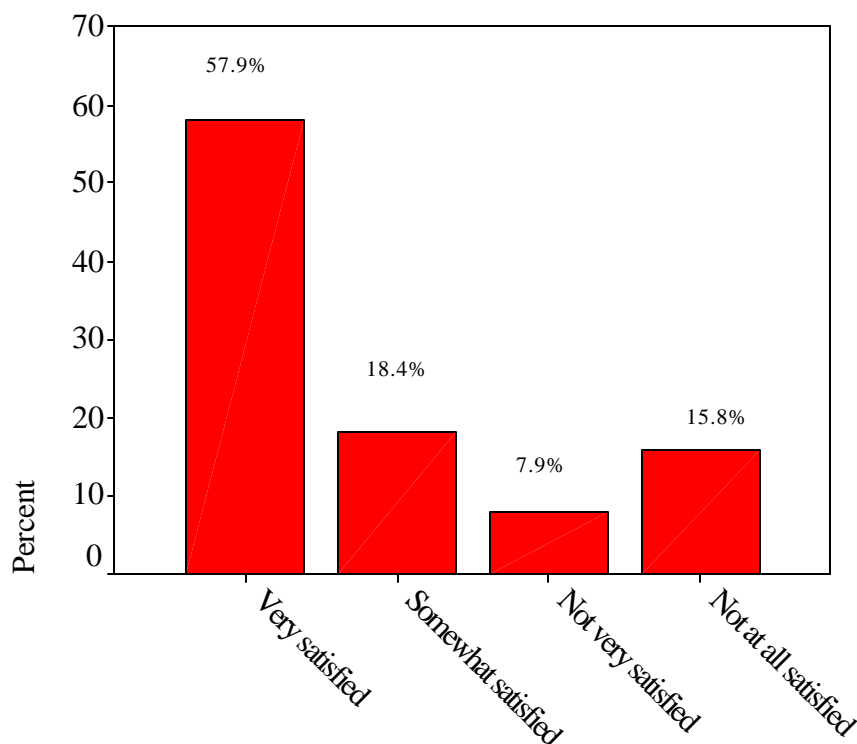
Services Provided by Legal Aid of Nebraska Most Recently
(based on 38 respondents)

	n	%[*]
Represented you or prepared for a hearing or lawsuit	13	34.2%
Provided you legal advice	10	26.3%
Reviewed, prepared or filed legal documents	4	10.5%
Intervened or represented you in a non-court dispute (wrote letter, negotiated)	3	7.9%
Represented you in non-adversary court situation	1	2.6%
Worked for change in laws, rules and regulations	1	2.6%
Other	1	2.6%
Don't know	6	15.8%

* Adds to more than 100% because some respondents gave multiple answers.

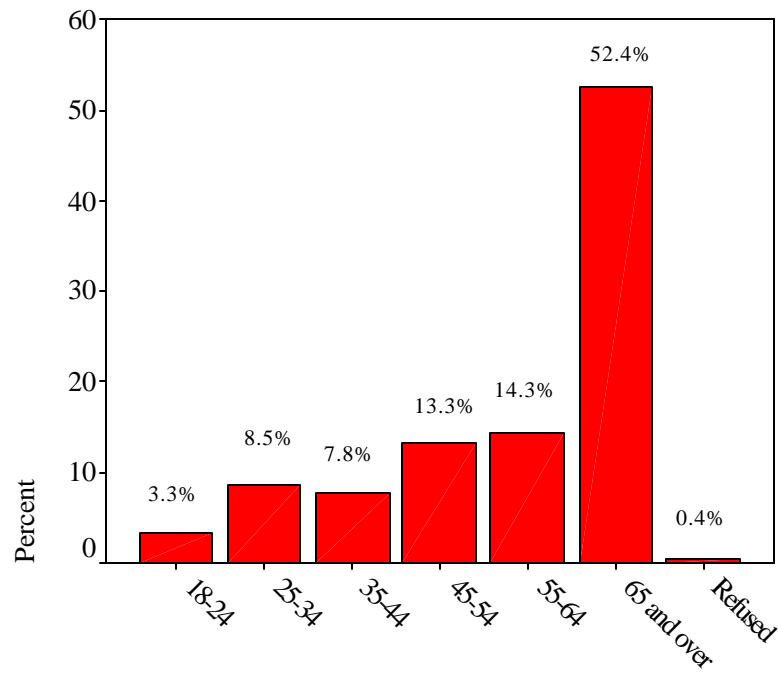
- The following graph illustrates the responses when the interviewees who had used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska were asked how satisfied they were with the most recent services they received.

Satisfaction With Services Received from Legal Aid of Nebraska
(based on 38 responses)

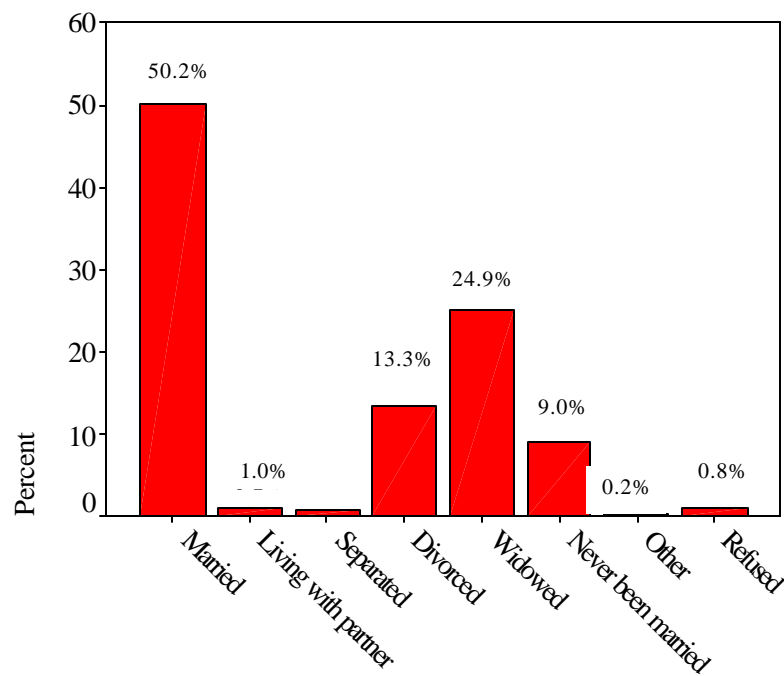


- Only six of the 38 individuals who had received Legal Aid Services said they were not at all satisfied with the services they received. The reasons mentioned were the lawyer did not explain things to them, the lawyer did not keep them well-informed, they were unable to get their need met/lost case, and there has been no change so they are still not satisfied.
- When respondents were asked what, if anything, Legal Aid of Nebraska could do differently to assist them, 85.7% said they didn't know because they have not used the services of Legal Aid, followed by 6.5% (76 respondents) who said to place more advertising/become more visible, 1.7% (20 people) who said try harder/actually help, and 1.5% (18 individuals) who said change income standards. The other responses are listed in the totals and percentages.
- Next, respondents were asked a series of demographic questions. Their responses are shown in the following graphs.

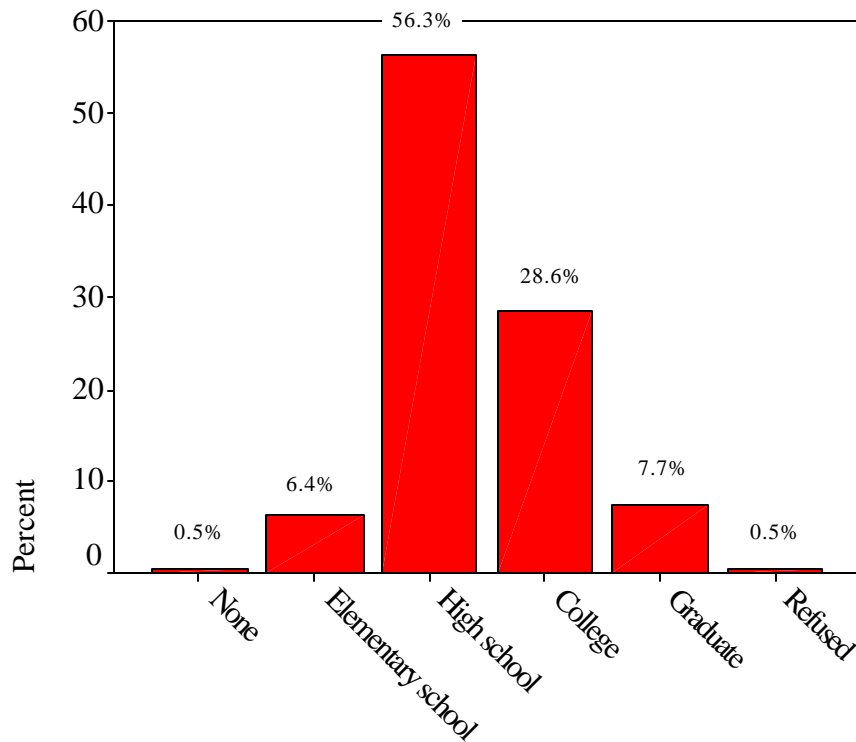
Age



Marital Status



Highest School Grade Completed

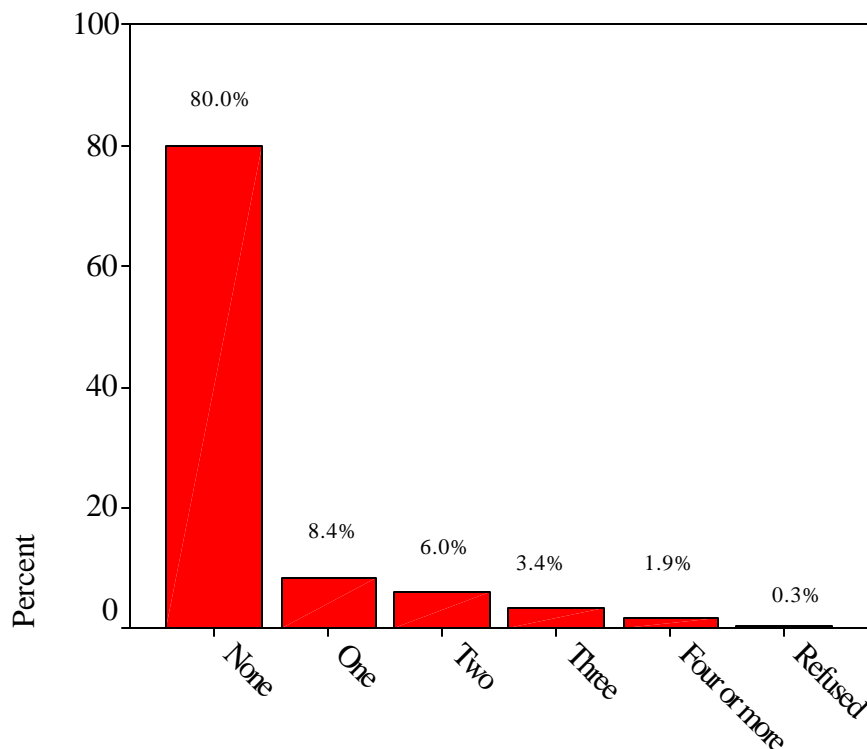


Current Work Situation (arranged in descending order)

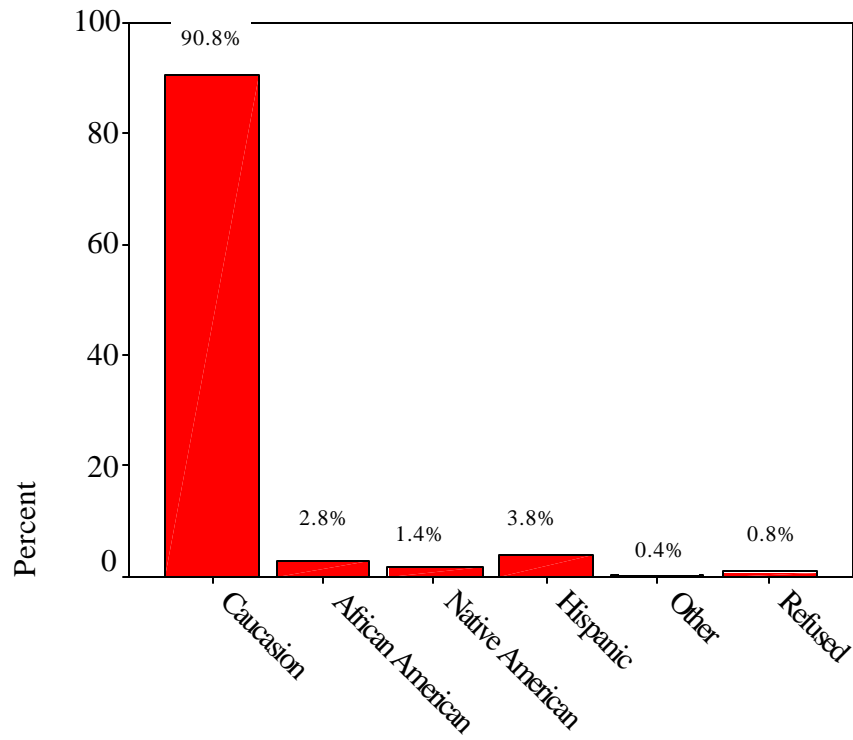
	n	%
Retired	570	47.5%
Working full-time	331	27.6%
Working part-time	122	10.2%
Disabled and unable to work	67	5.6%
Homemaker	59	4.9%
Unemployed, looking for work	27	2.3%
In school	11	0.9%
Unemployed, not looking for work	9	0.9%
Refused	4	0.3%

- One-half of the respondents (51.5%) own their home free and clear. Another 24.3% own their home with a mortgage or loan, while 20.4% are renting their home, and 2.7% are occupying their home without payment of rent. Thirteen individuals refused to respond to the question.
- The majority of the respondents (94.3%) do not live in public housing, housing paid for or run by a government agency or do not get help with rent from a government program like Section 8, while 4.6% of the respondents said they do. Another 0.5% said they did not know and eight individuals refused to answer the question.
- The following graphs illustrate the remaining demographic questions interviewees were asked.

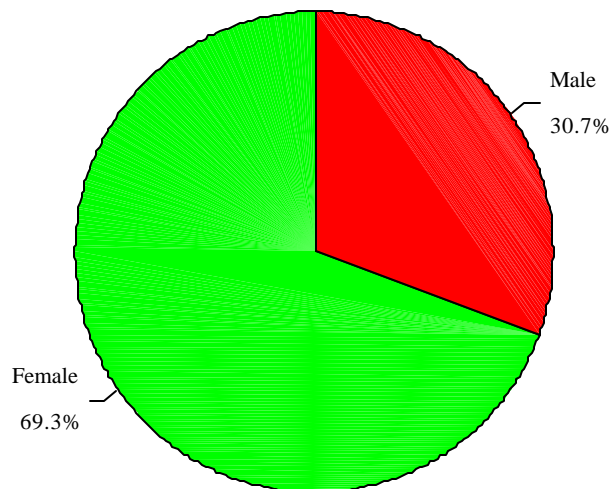
Number of Children Living in Household Under Age 18



Respondent Ethnic Background



Respondent Gender



Telephone Survey Cross-Tabulation Findings

Income

- Of the three biggest challenges most mentioned, a higher percentage of respondents with incomes of less than \$25,000 (24.8%) said health care is their biggest challenge than did those with incomes of \$25,000-\$37,000 (16.3%).
- 68.2% of those with incomes of \$25,000-\$37,000 were not aware of a service in their area that makes referrals to lawyers, compared to 60.7% of those with incomes of less than \$25,000 who were not aware.
- 31.5% of those with incomes of \$25,000-\$37,000 said they are not eligible for free legal services, while 20.2% of those with incomes of less than \$25,000 said they were not eligible.
- A higher percentage (74.8%) of those with incomes of \$25,000-\$37,000 are aware of a small claims court where ordinary people can go to have their cases heard than were those with incomes of less than \$25,000 (65.2%).

Age

- Of the three biggest challenges most mentioned, a higher percentage of those 18-64 said personal finance is their biggest challenge than did those 65 or over. A higher percentage of those 65 and over said health care is their biggest challenge.
- 20.7% of those 18-64 have needed a lawyer in the past year for something that did not include a crime, compared to 12.7% of those 65 and over who needed a lawyer.
- 12.8% of those 18-65 who had legal needs said their needs were not handled by the lawyer, compared to 25% of those 65 and over whose needs were not met.
- A higher percentage of those 65 and over are not familiar with the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska (67.1%) than were those 18-64 (59.5%).

Location

- Health care issues were the biggest challenge mentioned by a higher percentage of Grand

Island respondents (36.5%) than the total population (27.9%).

- Of the top three challenges mentioned, personal finance is less of a challenge for respondents in Lincoln than for those in other areas. Health care is less of a challenge for those in Omaha than for those in other areas.
- 100% of the non-criminal legal needs of respondents in Lincoln were handled by a lawyer.
- 75% of respondents in North Platte were not aware of a service in their area that makes referrals to lawyers, compared to 64.4% of the total population who were not aware.
- Again, a higher percentage of respondents in North Platte were not aware of any free civil legal service for people who can't afford a lawyer than were those in other areas.
- More North Platte respondents were not familiar with the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska than were respondents in the other communities.
- Only one individual from North Platte had ever used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska. Of those who have not used Legal Aid services, 23.6% from North Platte said it is because they have not heard of the organization, compared to 12.3% of respondents statewide who have not heard of Legal Aid.
- 74.4% of respondents from Lincoln who have not used Legal Aid said it is because they have had no need, compared to 61.1% of the total population who said they did not have a need.

Telephone Survey Totals and Percentages

1. Please name three of the biggest challenges faced by your family.

	n	%
Health issues	335	27.9
Financial	321	26.8
Unemployment	119	9.9
Taxes	106	8.8
Insurance	59	4.9
Education	58	4.8
Children	53	4.4
Fuel prices	48	4.0
Economy	48	4.0
Death of spouse/family members	46	3.8
Drought/Poor weather	46	3.8
Prescription coverage	33	2.8
Transportation	29	2.4
Farming	28	2.3
High cost of utilities	24	2.0
Housing	18	1.5
Aging	18	1.5
Disabilities	17	1.4
Low wages	16	1.3
Divorce	16	1.3
Drugs/Alcohol	15	1.3
New Medicare	14	1.2
Daily tasks	12	1.0
Politicians/government	11	0.9
Retirement	11	0.9
Daycare	9	0.8
Single parent	9	0.8
Discrimination	9	0.8
Illegal immigration	8	0.7
No recreation	8	0.7
Grain prices	8	0.7
Depression	8	0.7
Nutrition	8	0.7

Time	8	0.7
Crime	7	0.6
Marriage	7	0.6
Iraq	7	0.6
Social Security	6	0.5
Price of groceries	5	0.4
Religion	5	0.4
Water quality	5	0.4
Child support	4	0.3
Flood	4	0.3
Tornado	4	0.3
Home repairs	4	0.3
Moral issues	4	0.3
Car repairs	4	0.3
Running a business	4	0.3
Law enforcement	3	0.3
Alone	3	0.3
Roads	3	0.3
Military	3	0.3
Property	3	0.3
Legal issues	3	0.3
Population	3	0.3
Price of commodities	2	0.2
Financial aid	2	0.2
Distance from family	2	0.2
Emotional	2	0.2
Gun control	2	0.2
Wills	2	0.2
Welfare	2	0.2
Doctors overcharging Medicare	1	0.1
Neighbors	1	0.1
Wildlife preservation	1	0.1
Veterans	1	0.1
World	1	0.1
Big business	1	0.1
Language	1	0.1
Abortion	1	0.1

Interest rates	1	0.1
Snow storms	1	0.1
State assistance	1	0.1
Mountain lions	1	0.1
Sex offenders	1	0.1
Don't know	319	26.6

2. Now, I am going to read you a list of challenges. Did anything on this list change your decision of your top three challenges? If yes, which?

	n	%
Taxes	150	12.5
Health care	141	11.8
Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)	133	11.1
Insurance	110	9.2
Employment	65	5.4
Transportation	56	4.7
Divorce	54	4.5
Education	52	4.3
Alcohol/drug abuse	52	4.3
Child support	37	3.1
Child care	31	2.6
Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)	30	2.5
Immigration status	30	2.5
Wills/trusts/estate planning	28	2.3
Welfare/benefits	27	2.3
Unemployment or worker's compensation	26	2.2
Business credit and financial issues	25	2.1
Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)	25	2.1
Job training	25	2.1
Child custody	23	1.9
Domestic violence	17	1.4
City/municipal services (garbage, abandoned building, unrepared streets/sidewalks)	16	1.3
School enrollment for children	12	1.0
Food/clothing	10	0.8
Elder abuse (physical, financial)	5	0.4
Guardianship	7	0.6
Other	13	1.1

Weather	2	
Fuel costs	2	
Death in family	2	
Daily tasks	1	
Politicians	1	
Farming	1	
Child abuse	2	
Foster care	1	
Abortion	1	
None	628	52.3

3. Of the three biggest challenges you just mentioned, which is the biggest challenge? **(One response only.)**

	n	%
Personal finance	247	20.6
Health care	247	20.6
Taxes	96	8.0
Insurance	50	4.2
Employment	43	3.6
Education	27	2.3
Transportation	20	1.7
Alcohol/drug abuse	20	1.7
Housing	19	1.6
Divorce	15	1.3
Child care	12	1.0
Child support	10	0.8
Business credit and financial issues	9	0.8
Domestic violence	8	0.7
Immigration status	8	0.7
Unemployment or worker's compensation	8	0.7
Discrimination	7	0.6
Child custody	6	0.5
Welfare/benefits	6	0.5
Wills/trust/estate planning	6	0.5
Job training	4	0.3
City/municipal services	3	0.3
Food/clothing	2	0.2

School enrollment for children	2	0.2
Other	130	10.8
Death in family	23	
Farming	14	
Children	13	
Weather	12	
Economy	10	
Fuel costs	9	
Politicians	5	
Prescription drugs	5	
Daily tasks	4	
Time with family	3	
Aging	3	
Religion	2	
Home repairs	2	
No recreation	2	
Child abuse	2	
Abortion	2	
Morality	2	
Disabilities	2	
Retirement	2	
Cost of living	1	
Distance from everyone	1	
Prosperity	1	
Foster care	1	
Law enforcement	1	
Water quality	1	
Price of commodities	1	
Social security	1	
Single parent	1	
Depression	1	
Marriage	1	
Sex offenders	1	
Legal issues	1	
None	195	16.3
4. In the past year, have you needed a lawyer for something that did not include a crime?		
	n	%
Yes	197	16.4

No	1002	83.5
Don't know	1	0.1
5. How many times have you seen a lawyer for non-criminal legal problems in the past year?		
	n	%
None	10	5.1
One	71	36.0
Two	54	27.4
Three	27	13.7
Four or more	35	17.8
6. Were your non-criminal legal needs handled by the lawyer?		
	n	%
Yes	176	89.3
No	17	8.6
Don't know	4	2.0
7. How many times in the past year were your non-criminal legal needs <u>not</u> met?		
	n	%
One	12	57.1
Two	4	19.0
Three	0	0.0
Four or more	3	14.3
Don't know	2	9.5
8. Why were your non-criminal needs <u>not</u> met by a lawyer?		
	n	%
A lawyer wouldn't have helped	2	9.5
Lawyers are too expensive	2	9.5
Handled it on my own	4	19.0
Left the situation (moved)	0	0.0
Took other action	0	0.0
Situation was resolved	4	19.0
Never got around to contacting a lawyer	0	0.0
Other	6	28.6
Social security benefits were not given	1	
Could not find a lawyer to take the case	1	
Still not resolved	4	
Don't know	3	14.3

9. Have you ever been placed on a waiting list when trying to get help from a free legal aid program?

	n	%
Yes	37	3.1
How long?		
6 months	8	
Don't know	5	
3 months	4	
1 year	3	
2 years	3	
Still waiting	2	
1 week	2	
1 month	2	
2 months	2	
9 months	1	
10 years	1	
10 weeks	1	
9 years	1	
4 years	1	
No wait	1	
No	1157	96.4
Don't know	6	0.5

10. If you needed a lawyer in the future:

	n	%
a. Are you aware of a service in your area that makes referrals to lawyers?		
Yes	371	30.9
No	773	64.4
Don't know	56	4.7
b. Are you aware of any free civil legal services for people who can't afford a lawyer?		
Yes	439	36.6
No	705	58.8
Don't know	56	4.7
c. Are you eligible for free legal services?		
Yes	168	14.0
No	310	25.8
Why not?		
Only semi-retired	1	
Make too much	270	

Have own lawyer	1	
Don't know	38	
Don't know	722	60.2

d. Are you aware of any mediation services in your area that work out an agreement between people involved in a dispute?

Yes	242	20.2
No	877	73.1
Don't know	81	6.8

e. Are you aware of a small claims court where ordinary people can go to have their cases heard?

Yes	840	70.0
No	324	27.0
Don't know	36	3.0

11. Are you familiar with the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

	n	%
Yes	423	35.3
No	762	63.5
Don't know	15	1.3

12. Have you ever used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

	n	%
Yes	38	3.2
No	1162	96.8

13. Why have you not ever used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

	n	%
Handled the situation on my own	94	8.1
Have never heard of the organization	143	12.3
Was turned down by Legal Aid of Nebraska	16	1.4
Didn't know I was eligible for services from the organization	63	5.4
Didn't know it was free; thought it would be too expensive	3	0.3
Afraid/intimidated	3	0.3
Other	94	8.1
Have my own lawyer	63	
Would not qualify	18	
Did not answer their phones	3	

No office located near us	2	
Could not find information on them	2	
Too proud	2	
They do not do a good job	1	
They were not qualified	1	
Work at courthouse	1	
They referred me elsewhere	1	
Don't know	36	3.1
No need	710	61.1

14. When was the most recent time you used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

	n	%
1975	2	5.3
1980	1	2.6
1984	1	2.6
1986	2	5.3
1990	1	2.6
1993	1	2.6
1994	1	2.6
1995	4	10.5
1996	1	2.6
1997	1	2.6
1999	1	2.6
2000	2	5.3
2001	2	5.3
2002	2	5.3
2003	4	10.5
2004	5	13.2
2005	6	15.8
Don't know/Can't remember	1	2.6

15. Which if any of the following services did Legal Aid of Nebraska provide to you most recently?

	n	%
Represented you or prepared for a hearing or lawsuit	13	34.2
Provided you legal advice	10	26.3
Don't know	6	15.8
Reviewed, prepared or filed legal documents	4	10.5
Intervened or represented you in a non-court dispute (wrote letter;		

negotiated)	3	7.9
Represented you in non-adversary court situation	1	2.6
Worked for change in laws, rules or regulations	1	2.6
Other	1	2.6
Helped with social security check	1	

16. How satisfied were you with the most recent services you received from Legal Aid of Nebraska?

	n	%
Very satisfied	22	57.9
Somewhat satisfied	7	18.4
Not very satisfied	3	7.9
Not at all satisfied	6	15.8

17. Why were you not satisfied with the services you received?

	n	%
Unable to get need met; lost case, etc.	5	55.6
Lawyer did not explain things to me	1	11.1
The lawyer was not honest in dealings with me	0	0.0
Lawyer did not keep me well-informed	1	11.1
Unsatisfactory compromise reached	0	0.0
Situation has gotten worse	0	0.0
No change and (still) unhappy with it	1	11.1
Other	1	11.1
Would not take case	1	
Don't know/Can't recall	0	0.0

18. What, if anything, could Legal Aid of Nebraska have done differently to assist you?

	n	%
Never needed it	1005	85.7
More advertising/visibility	76	6.5
Try harder/Actually help	20	1.7
Change income standards	18	1.5
Never heard of them	8	0.7
Lower taxes	6	0.5
Have more locations	6	0.5

Shorter waiting lists	6	0.5
Allow elderly again	4	0.3
Did not know if they would quality	3	0.3
Help regardless of income	3	0.3
Return calls	3	0.3
Give more Social Security money	2	0.2
Financial help	2	0.2
Give legal advice	2	0.2
Help with wills	2	0.2
File bankruptcies	2	0.2
Answer the phone	2	0.2
Told me it was free	1	0.1
More jobs	1	0.1
Better pay	1	0.1
Fund it more so it is more accessible	1	0.1
Provide actual lawyer	1	0.1
Take malpractice case	1	0.1
Get rid of junk mail	1	0.1
Take on more complex cases	1	0.1
Help find family	1	0.1
Less paperwork	1	0.1
Help with divorces	1	0.1

19. For classification purposes, in which of the following age groups are you?

	n	%
18-24	39	3.3
25-34	102	8.5
35-44	94	7.8
45-54	159	13.3
55-64	172	14.3
65 and over	629	52.4
Refused	5	0.4

20. What is your current marital status? Are you:

	n	%
Married	602	50.2
Living with a partner	12	1.0
Separated	8	0.7
Divorced	159	13.3
Widowed	299	24.9

Never been married	108	9.0
Other	2	0.2
Refused	10	0.8

21. What is the highest grade in school that you have completed?

	n	%
None	6	0.5
Elementary school	77	6.4
High school	676	56.3
College	343	28.6
Graduate/professional school	92	7.7
Other	0	0.0
Refused	6	0.5

22. Which of the following statements best describes your current work situation? Are you:

	n	%
Working full-time (35 hours or more per week)	331	27.6
Working part-time (less than 34 hours per week)	122	10.2
Unemployed or laid off and looking for work	27	2.3
Unemployed or laid off and not looking for work	9	0.8
Retired	570	47.5
Disabled and unable to work	67	5.6
In school	11	0.9
A homemaker	59	4.9
Other	0	0.0
Refused	4	0.3

23. Is the home in which you are living:

	n	%
Owned with a mortgage or loan	291	24.3
Owned free and clear, without a mortgage or loan	618	51.5
Rented	245	20.4
Occupied without payment of rent	32	2.7
Other	1	0.1
Refused	13	1.1

24. Do you live in public housing, live in housing paid for or run by a government agency, or do you get help with the rent from a government program like Section 8?

	n	%
Yes	55	4.6

No	1131	94.3
Don't know	6	0.5
Refused	8	0.7

25. How many children do you have living in your household under the age of 18?

	n	%
None	960	80.0
One	101	8.4
Two	72	6.0
Three	41	3.4
Four or more	23	1.9
Refused	3	0.3

26. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

	n	%
Caucasian (white)	1089	90.8
African American (black)	33	2.8
Native American	17	1.4
Hispanic	46	3.8
Other	5	0.4
Refused	10	0.8

27. Respondent gender

	n	%
Male	368	30.7
Female	832	69.3

Phase II – Written Survey of Legal Board and staff, judges and attorneys, and human services providers.

a. Board and Staff

- The following table shows the responses when Legal Aid of Nebraska's board members and staff were asked in which Legal Aid of Nebraska offices they are located. The table is arranged in descending order.

Location	n	%
Omaha	17	51.5%
Lincoln	6	18.2%
Grand Island	4	12.1%
North Platte	2	6.1%
Bancroft	1	3.0%
North Platte	1	3.0%
No response	2	6.1%

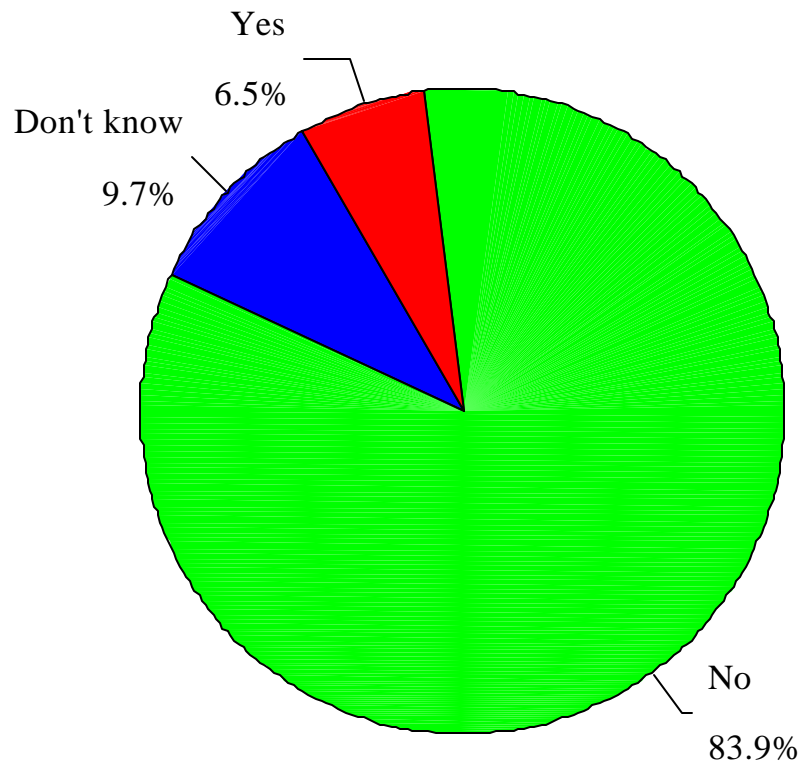
- When asked what the three most critical needs (civil legal services) are for their clients that are not currently being met, Legal Aid board members and staff most mentioned child support modifications, divorce, custody, predatory lending and domestic violence. Many other needs were mentioned and are listed in the totals and percentages.
- The most-mentioned greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska include committed/dedicated attorneys and staff, knowledgeable and experienced attorneys who care, the team mentality and good reputation. Again, many strengths were mentioned. Those can be found in the totals and percentages.
- Next, board members and staff were asked the greatest weaknesses of Legal Aid of Nebraska. The most mentioned responses were limited number of attorneys/staff, staff turnover, lack of electronic research tools/computer technology support, lack of funding, lack of diversity on staff and inflexible personnel policies.

- If resources are limited, the areas of concern board members and staff think Legal Aid of Nebraska should focus include domestic abuse, housing, custody, public benefits and bankruptcy. The other areas of concern mentioned are listed in the totals and percentages.
- Next, Legal Aid board members and staff were asked how they would describe the delivery of legal services to their clients. The following graph illustrates their responses. *(Percentage does not total 100% because not all respondents answered this question).*



- The following graph shows the responses when board members and staff were asked if they would say Legal Aid of Nebraska is adequately funded.

Legal Aid Adequately Funded



- The common theme for the variety of reasons why they think Legal Aid of Nebraska is not adequately funded was that Legal Aid is not meeting the need/demand for services. The reasons mentioned are listed in the totals and percentages section.
- Overall, many of the Legal Aid of Nebraska board members and staff described their firm's performance and effectiveness as a legal services provider in meeting the needs of their clients as excellent or good based on the resources available. The full list of responses can be found in the totals and percentages.

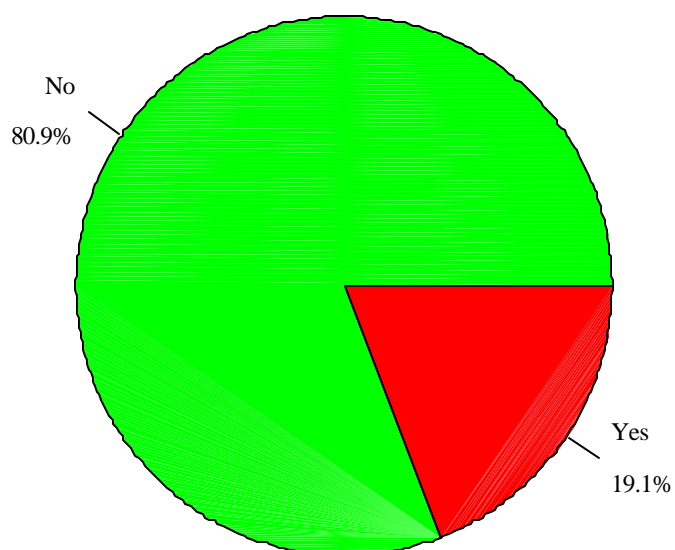
b. Judges

- The following table shows the responses when Judges were asked what Legal Aid of Nebraska office is nearest to them. The table is arranged in descending order.

Location	n	%
Lincoln	16	31.4%
Omaha	13	25.5%
Scottsbluff	6	11.8%
Grand Island	5	9.8%
Norfolk	4	7.8%
North Platte	4	7.8%
Bancroft	3	5.9%

- When asked to name the three most critical needs (civil legal services) among Nebraska residents who qualify, according to federal poverty guidelines, for Legal Aid services, judges mentioned domestic relations, divorce, landlord/tenant matters and custody most often. Many other needs were mentioned and those can be found in the totals and percentages.
- Next, judges were asked if, in their opinion, these civil legal needs are being met. Their responses are shown in the following graph.

Legal Needs Being Met



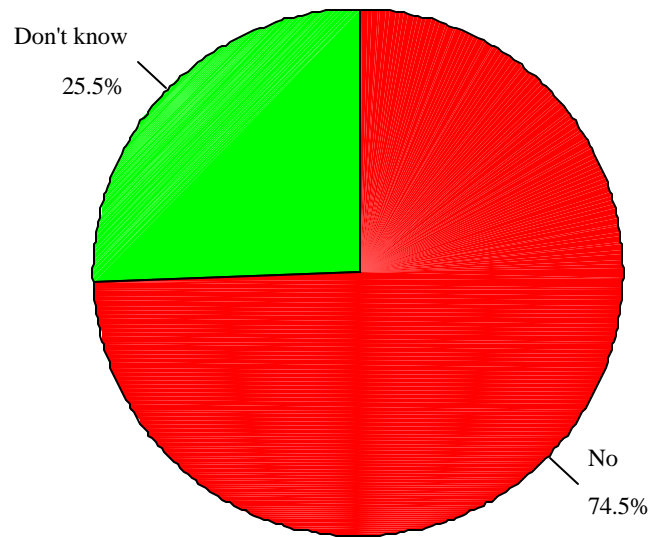
- From a list of challenges (other than legal services) judges were asked to check which, in their view, are the three biggest challenges faced by residents of Nebraska who qualify for Legal Aid. The following table shows their responses arranged in descending order. All responses were tabulated.

Biggest Challenges Faced by Qualified Nebraskans

Challenge	n	%
Divorce	21	13.5%
Housing	18	11.5%
Personal finance	15	9.6%
Child support	14	9.0%
Domestic violence	13	8.3%
Employment	13	8.3%
Child custody	12	7.7%
Job training	8	5.1%
Education	7	4.5%
Alcohol/drug abuse	7	4.5%
Transportation	6	3.8%
Child care	6	3.8%
Healthcare	5	3.2%
Welfare/benefits	3	1.9%
Immigration status	2	1.3%
Discrimination	1	0.6%
Guardianship	1	0.6%
Other	4	2.6%

- The greatest assets/strengths of Legal Aid of Nebraska most mentioned by judges were competent/capable lawyers, dedication/commitment, responsiveness and high quality. The other assets/strengths mentioned are listed in the totals and percentages.
- The greatest weaknesses of Legal Aid of Nebraska most mentioned by judges were not enough attorneys/staff to meet the needs and insufficient funding. Again, the other weaknesses mentioned are listed in the totals and percentages.
- If resources are limited, the most mentioned services or areas of concern judges think Legal Aid of Nebraska should focus on are domestic relations, divorce, child custody and child support. Other responses are in the totals and percentages.
- The following graph shows the responses when judges were asked if they would say Legal Aid of Nebraska is adequately funded.

Legal Aid Adequately Funded



- The common theme for the variety of reasons why judges think Legal Aid of Nebraska is not adequately funded was the need for more lawyers. All reasons mentioned are listed in the totals and percentages section.

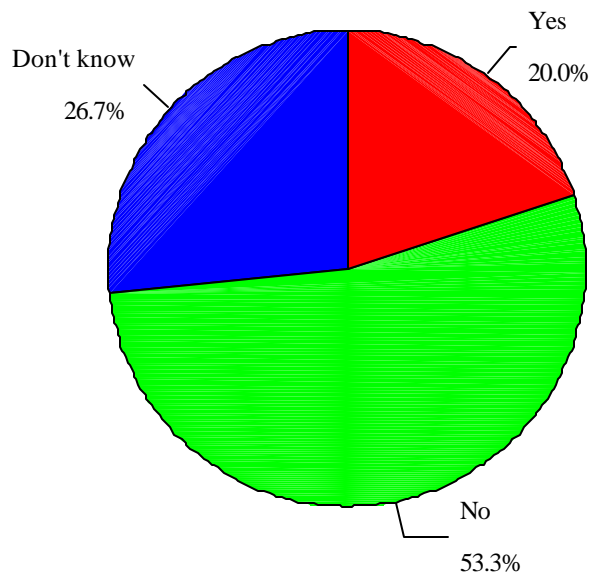
c. Attorneys

- The following table shows the responses when attorneys were asked what Legal Aid of Nebraska office is nearest to them. The table is arranged in descending order.

Location	n	%
Omaha	13	38.2%
Lincoln	12	35.3%
Grand Island	3	8.8%
North Platte	3	8.8%
Norfolk	2	5.9%
Scottsbluff	1	2.9%

- When asked what the most critical needs (civil legal services) are among Nebraska residents who qualify for Legal Aid services, the needs most mentioned by attorneys were housing, divorce, landlord/tenant and domestic relations. Several other needs were mentioned and can be found in the totals and percentages.
- Next, attorneys were asked if, in their opinion, these civil legal needs are being met. Their responses are shown in the following graph.

Legal Needs Being Met



- From a list of challenges (other than legal services) attorneys were asked to check

which, in their view, are the three biggest challenges faced by residents of Nebraska who qualify for Legal Aid. The following table shows their responses arranged in descending order. All responses were tabulated.

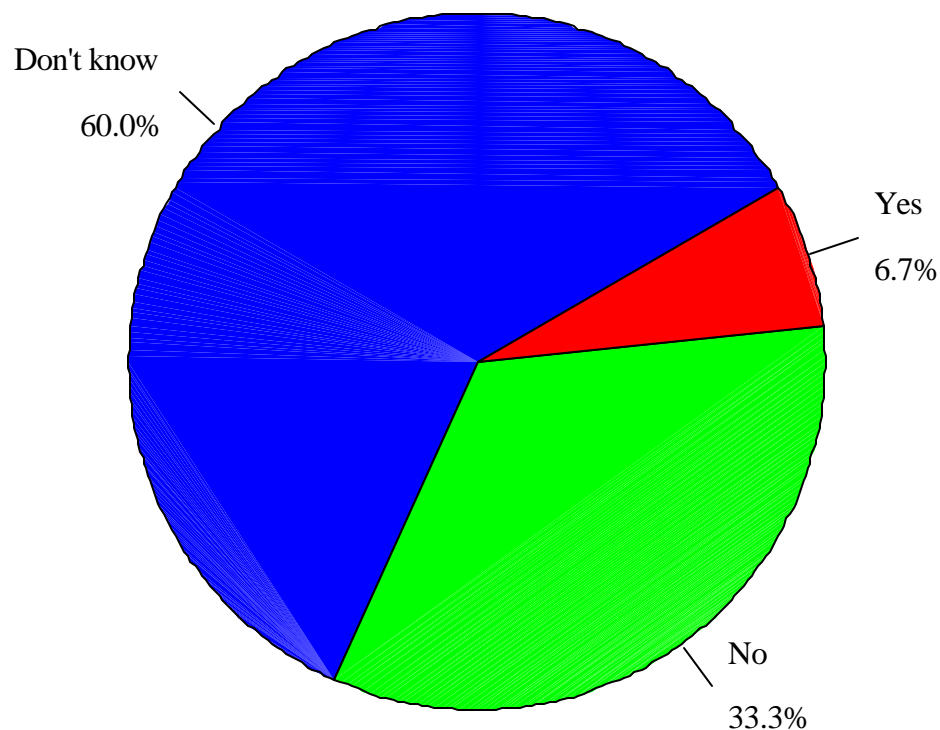
Biggest Challenges Faced by Qualified Nebraskans

Challenge	n	%
Housing	21	20.4%
Personal finance	14	13.6%
Divorce	12	11.7%
Child support	10	9.7%
Domestic violence	6	5.8%
Job training	6	5.8%
Employment	6	5.8%
Child custody	5	4.9%
Alcohol/drug abuse	4	3.9%
Health care	4	3.9%
Child care	4	3.9%
Education	3	2.9%
Transportation	1	1.0%
Welfare/benefits	1	1.0%
Business credit and financial issues	1	1.0%
Food/clothing	1	1.0%
Immigration status	1	1.0%
School enrollment for children	1	1.0%
Unemployment or worker's compensation	1	1.0%
Other	1	1.0%

- The Legal Aid of Nebraska assets/strengths most mentioned by attorneys were dedication and competence of the staff and good attorneys. The other responses mentioned are listed in the totals and percentages.

- The greatest weaknesses of Legal Aid of Nebraska most mentioned by attorneys were not enough attorneys, lack of funding and caseload. Again, the other responses mentioned are listed in the totals and percentages.
- If resources are limited, the most mentioned services or areas of concern attorneys think Legal Aid of Nebraska should focus on are housing, domestic relations and child support. The other responses can be found in the totals and percentages.
- Attorneys next were asked, based on what they know, if Legal Aid of Nebraska is adequately funded.

Legal Aid Adequately Funded



d. Human Services Providers

- The following table shows the responses when human services providers were asked what Legal Aid of Nebraska office is nearest to them. The table is arranged in descending order.

Location	n	%
Omaha	22	25.9%
Lincoln	16	18.8%
Grand Island	16	18.8%
North Platte	11	12.9%
Scottsbluff	11	12.9%
Norfolk	9	10.6%

- Human services providers were asked to indicate the primary population their organization serves. Their responses are shown below in descending order. Some providers gave more than one response. All responses were tabulated.

Primary Population	N	%
Families (low income)	60	16.7%
Women	58	16.1%
Seniors	40	11.1%
Persons with disabilities	37	10.3%
Ethnic/Racial/Cultural groups	37	10.3%
Men	33	9.2%
Youth	32	8.9%
Family (special needs)	26	7.2%
Students	24	6.7%
Other	13	3.6%

- Next, human services providers were asked the primary age of the consumers served by their organization. Their responses are shown the following table. Some providers indicated more than one age group. All responses were tabulated.

Primary Age	n	%
17 and under	34	13.6%
18-24	44	17.6%
25-34	57	22.8%
35-50	50	20.0%
51-60	30	12.0%
60 or older	35	14.0%

- The types of direct or indirect services provided by human services providers who responded to the survey include the following, arranged in descending order:

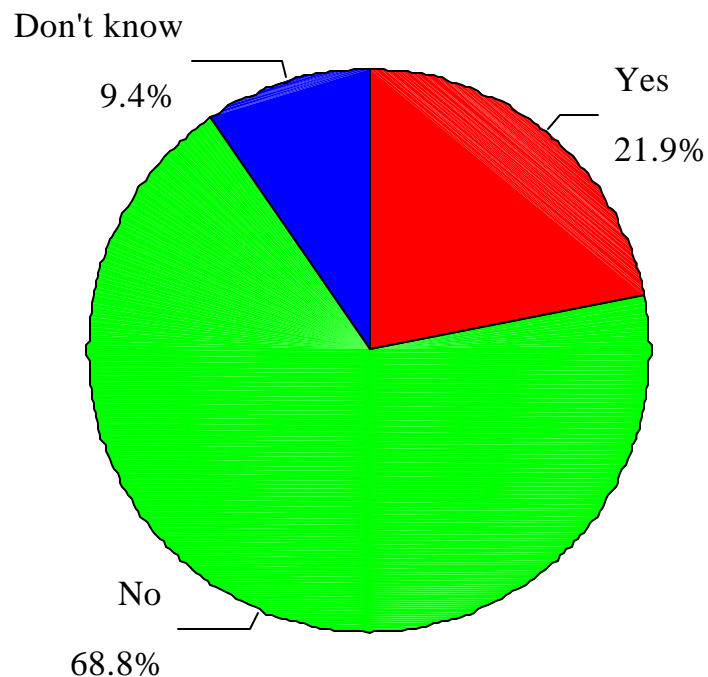
Services Provided	n	%
Information and referral	68	13.1%
Emergency services	54	10.4%
Case management	44	8.5%
Family support	40	7.7%
Financial assistance	39	7.5%
Transportation	38	7.3%
Government program for the poor	31	6.0%
Counseling services	30	5.8%
Employment assistance	29	5.6%
Housing	25	4.8%
Healthcare	24	4.6%
Child care	22	4.2%
Education assistance	20	3.8%
Legal services	20	3.8%
Job training	14	2.7%
Recreation	6	1.2%
Discrimination assistance	5	1.0%
Other	11	2.1%

- When asked what are the most critical needs (civil legal services) for their clients who

qualify for Legal Aid services, the most mentioned responses from human services providers were divorce, child custody, child support services and housing. Many other needs were mentioned and can be found in the totals and percentages.

- The following graph illustrates the responses when human services providers were asked, in their opinion, if these civil legal needs are being met.

Civil Legal Needs Being Met



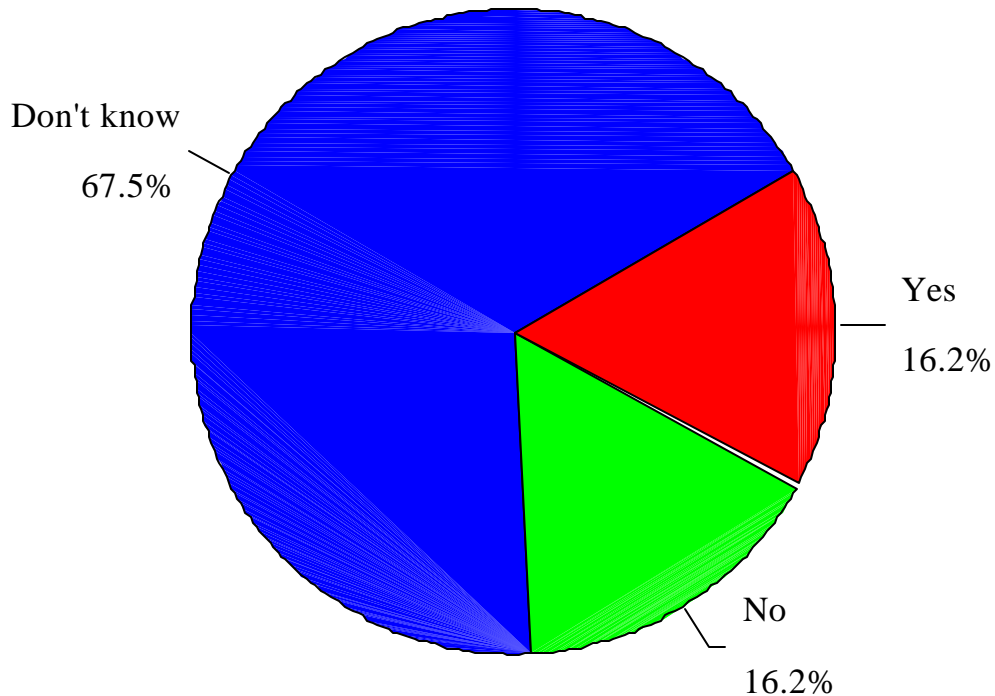
- From a list of challenges (other than legal services) human services providers were asked to check which, in their view, are the three biggest challenges faced by their clients who qualify for Legal Aid services. The following table shows their responses arranged in descending order. All responses were tabulated.

Biggest Challenges Faced by Human Services Provider Clients

Challenge	n	%
Housing	56	16.0%
Personal finance	36	10.3%
Domestic violence	26	7.4%
Employment	26	7.4%
Alcohol/drug abuse	25	7.1%
Healthcare	21	6.0%
Child support	20	5.7%
Welfare/benefits	19	5.4%
Divorce	16	4.6%
Child custody	15	4.3%
Transportation	14	4.0%
Child care	10	2.9%
Education	9	2.6%
Immigration status	9	2.6%
Food/clothing	8	2.3%
Job training	7	2.0%
Discrimination	7	2.0%
Guardianship	7	2.0%
Insurance	7	2.0%
Unemployment or worker's compensation	3	0.9%
Elder abuse	2	0.6%
Business credit and financial issues	2	0.6%
Wills/trusts/estate planning	2	0.6%
Taxes	1	0.3%
Other	2	0.6%

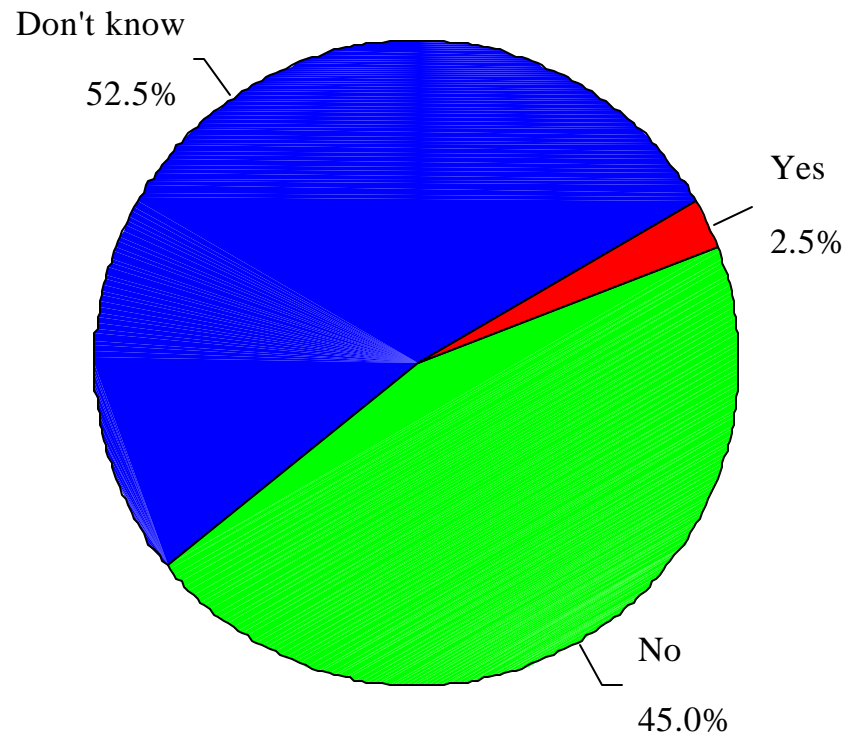
- Three-fourths of the human service providers (75%) said they have referred their clients to Legal Aid of Nebraska within the past year, while the other 25% said they had not. Many responses ranging from one to more than 1,000 were given when asked how many clients they have referred in the past year. Those can be found in the totals and percentages.
- The following graph illustrates the responses when the human service providers were asked if, to their knowledge, their clients' legal needs were met.

Legal Needs Met



- The greatest assets/strengths of Legal Aid of Nebraska mentioned by human services providers are competent and caring attorneys, local, committed/dedicated attorneys/staff and accessibility.
- The greatest weaknesses of Legal Aid of Nebraska mentioned by human service providers are not enough attorneys/staff, limited resources, restrictive requirements/guidelines and lack of awareness of service.
- When human service providers were asked, in their opinion, what services or areas of concern Legal Aid of Nebraska should focus on, the most mentioned services were domestic violence, custody, housing and divorce.
- Human services providers next were asked, based on what they know, if Legal Aid of Nebraska is adequately funded. Their responses are illustrated in the following graph.

Legal Aid of Nebraska Adequately Funded



- The common theme for the variety of reasons why human service providers think Legal Aid of Nebraska is not adequately funded was the need for more lawyers. The reasons mentioned are listed in the totals and percentages section.

Written Survey Totals and Percentages

a. Board/Staff

1. In which of the following Legal Aid of Nebraska offices are you located?

	n	%
Omaha	17	51.5
Lincoln	6	18.2
Grand Island	4	12.1
North Platte	2	6.1
Scottsbluff	2	6.1
Bancroft	1	3.0
Norfolk	1	3.0

2. In your opinion, what are the three most critical needs (civil legal services) for your clients that are not currently being met?

Child support modifications	10
Divorce	6
Custody	5
Predatory lending	4
Domestic violence	3
More pro se clinics	3
Self help clinics	2
Bankruptcy	2
Guardianships	2

The following received one mention each:

Immigration status assistance
Representation in landlord/tenant disputes not involving public housing
Representation in visitation matters for non-custodial parent
Representation in divorce where custody or recent violence not at issue
Conservatorship
Juvenile court cases
Social security
Availability of staff to cover needs
Website explaining or more pamphlets on process of cases
Worker's compensation
Family law – paternity, if not handled by referee's office
Attorney services in family law cases, disability cases, bankruptcy cases

Expanded access to AccessLine
More expanded service
Visitation only cases
Representing the Native American population
Assisting the population to be served with self-help measures
Access to an attorney
Assistance in applying for public benefits
Assistance to tribes/tribal agencies
Representation in juvenile cases – tribal courts and state court
Lack of competent representation in ICWA cases
Income, shelter, security. In one word, self-sufficiency
Adequate and decent housing
Access to benefits
Direct representation of clients in court for custody, dissolution of marriage and abuse cases.
Divorce or custody proceedings where caller is a victim of abuse and we can't assist due to an office closing because of caseload is full.
Our office at AL is crowded and doesn't have enough working space or storage
I take you to mean that because of lack of resources we don't adequately serve any needs, landlord/tenant, family law, especially when there is violence (VAWA) and utility cut off in winter.
Unfortunately I can't answer this question due to the fact I don't work directly with this area of Legal Aid. But, I am sure if I were to ask any given staff member, the need for more attorneys.
We don't serve nearly enough low population, especially the racial minority members at our community. We don't provide assistance to the non-disabled in becoming self-sufficient. We don't provide any type of "legal education".
More services for the Hispanic community in family law issues, restrictions in the amount of cases we can take in general due to limited resources, more education in the community regarding services we can provide to victims of domestic violence, even if they do not have legal status.
Single parents need wills. Upon dissolution, clients do not have a will written. There are areas of financial/budget education that could be addressed for our client population before they need a bankruptcy during dissolution/custody; post hearing or without regard to other legal needs.
Legal needs unknown; however, clients need assistance with daily living skills.
No opinion

3. What are the three greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your office?

Committed/dedicated attorneys/staff	11
Knowledgeable and experienced attorneys who care	9
The team mentality	3
Attorneys/paralegals/staff	3
Good reputation	3
Hardworking attorneys/support staff	2
Mission	2
Diverse areas of legal expertise	2
AccessLine service	2
Good technology/equipment	2
Excellent administration/board	2

The following received one mention each:

Work ethic
 Prompt
 Reliable
 Family friendly
 Accessibility for surrounding counties
 Wonderful co-workers
 Ability to respond to emergencies
 Helping families who are victims of domestic abuse
 Helping women leave a dangerous situation
 Helping people get out from areas of financial stress
 Ability to stretch dollars as far as possible
 Law clerk located in the office for research
 Paralegals experienced at training new staff
 Legal Aid Service that is available statewide
 High level of client satisfaction
 Managers of litigation know their law
 Paralegals with ability to man the front desk
 Community ties
 Elder AccessLine
 Physical presence
 Team players, with very few personal problems.
 Professionalism

Leadership on civil legal issues
 Well organized
 Very capable professional staff
 Staff is young and aggressive
 Ability to adapt to change (grants, management)
 Flexibility
 Financial strength
 Myself
 We work as a team, our integrity with the courts, clients, etc.
 Our boss, Annette Farnan, is masterful in creating a pleasant work atmosphere even though our office itself (facility) is dirty and depressing.
 Everyone has the right attitude, is dedicated to their work and knows how to get the job done.

4. What are the three greatest weaknesses of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your office?

Limited number of attorneys/staff	9
Staff turnover	5
Lack of electronic research tools/computer technology support	5
Lack of funding	3
Lack of diversity on staff	3
Inflexible personnel policies	3
Stable attorney staff – recruitment and retention	3
The caseload volume	2
Not enough pay for employees	2
Inability to represent more clients	2
None	2

The following received one mention each:

Time – enough to met everyone’s needs
 Transportation for rural clients
 We need additional space – a move is in the works
 The lack of time to do in-depth research
 Accessibility for clients (use AccessLine first, parking)
 Support staff performing receptionist jobs
 Other organizations don’t give AccessLine number; give local number
 Currently have lost some senior management attorneys
 Need for adequate space for our staff to provide the service

Funding to continue to support the causes
 Ongoing legal education
 Not training new attorneys to take the place of retiring attorneys
 Not readily accessible as a location to walk-in clients
 Not assisting enough clients
 Inability to do more priorities
 Sort of a lack of purpose or “focus” – difficult to set “goals”
 Lack of belonging to the “community” of our clients
 Lack of space and a pleasant work environment
 Clean bathrooms
 Very little out-of-office training
 Feel “stretched” when covering outlying counties
 Lack of support/resources from the community
 Visibility of attorney staff in the community
 Insufficient number of professional staff
 Geographical distances
 Lack of authority to make basic decisions
 Reorganization issues
 No strategy to cause structural change to reduce poverty
 Funding more Access Line paralegals so clients don’t have to wait so long on hold
 Lack of resources for legal research and training; seminars not available yearly
 Not enough attorneys. Jennifer has an open caseload of over 70 clients.
 People call our office all the time wanting help. We need another attorney
 New compensation plan helps, but management still conveys an attitude that staff attorney can be easily replaced without appreciating the negative effect of turnover on office functions.
 Lack of funding to provide more assistance to our callers. We are planning a move and hopefully the facility will be much cleaner. Our bathrooms are filthy and the carpets are never vacuumed, etc., dirty windows, lobby.
 Not being told by management or recognized for the very stressful and difficult legal work we do.
 Don’t know.

5. In your opinion, on what services or areas of concern should Legal Aid of Nebraska focus if resources are limited?

Domestic abuse	10
Housing	10

Public benefits	6
Custody	7
Bankruptcy	5
Divorce	4
Consumer law	2
Family law	3
Moving people to self-sufficiency	2
Disability	2

The following received one mention each:

Child support
 Emergency family matters
 Maybe utilities
 Paternity
 Benefits, denied SSI, SSD
 Consumer lending
 Threat to income
 Threat to individual
 Juvenile law
 Staff, wages
 Taking more cases
 Assisting more clients
 Maintenance of critical needs (housing, jobs, benefits)
 SSI cases, threat to continued custody cases, exemptions
 Representing families first
 Impact litigation – i.e. ICWA cases
 For the Native American program – service/representation of tribes
 Community education
 Additional outreach to minorities
 Income: economic development
 Security: same two
 Making sure basic needs are met, shelter, food, utilities, safety, family, income/benefits.
 Service to victims of abuse. Many times victims of severe abuse are turned away especially for lack of funding in our PAI program.
 Fund-raising from non-traditional donors especially in view of fact VAWA grant end, probably sooner rather than later. Landlord and tenants and utility cutoff especially for both in winter.
 When funds are limited the focus should be in the order of priority. For example, first

child advocacy, second elderly and all others.

Ensuring access to public assistance programs. Preventing inequitable/unlawful evictions.

Children being abused

6. How would you describe the delivery of legal services to your clients?

	n	%
Prompt and reliable	14	45.2
Slow and reliable	4	12.9
Reliable	7	22.6
Other	6	19.4

The following received one mention each:

Uncertain, could be better, always room for improvements

Don't know.

Prompt and reliable, sometimes; slow and reliable, sometimes; reliable, always.

Prompt initial response, quality ongoing service and professional reliable wrap-up/conclusion.

I am not a casehandler.

Other. If at all possible, AccessLine needs to be expanded to get to more clients. The line runs quite well, but is too understaffed. Of course, this is the big problem all over the country for legal aid generally.

7. Based on what you know about Legal Aid of Nebraska, would you say the firm is adequately funded?

	n	%
Yes	2	6.5
I have never felt restricted due to funding	1	
No	26	83.9
Not enough money for attorneys and paralegals/staff	3	
More funding would allow us to take more cases	3	
Not meeting demand/need	2	

The following received one mention each:

We need to double our capacity to serve the basic need

Because of the amount of clients we have to turn away

Because the need always outweighs the funding

We are reaching at best 20-25% of our clientele

We could do so much more for so many more people
 Because we only touch the tip of the iceberg in terms of cases that need to be taken
 Because only 20-30 percent of people will be served
 For ability to provide greater service and reward staff efforts
 Lack of diversification of funding sources. We seem to be losing ground in this area despite management structure that devotes significant resources to fund raising.
 We average around 60 calls a day and only send on maybe five cases on for further representation.
 One never feels secure in employment – funds may not be available next year. Low salaries.
 Lack of expertise in non-profit capital management
 We are too reliant on one source (no VAWA or CSC funding, no Omaha office); we are still turning away potential clients due to lack of resources
 The caseload of LAN and the number of clients served is greater than in the private sector
 Our priorities for accepting family law cases in the domestic violence context are too restrictive due to limited resources (staff)

Don't know	3	9.7
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8. Overall, how would you describe your firm's performance and effectiveness as a legal services provider in meeting the needs of your clients?

Excellent as far as resources allow us to go	5
Excellent	4

The following received one mention each:

Improving but not there yet
 Very good
 Good, always could use improvements, needs more staff
 Below-average
 Reliable
 Good to excellent
 Good
 I would say that the majority of our clients are very happy with us
 Effective, but in need of additional resources
 Fair, high turnover hurts reputation in the community, demands that significant resources be used to constantly train new attorneys, hurts morale. The firm is only as strong as the collective effort of its staff attorneys. Without strong legal representation from staff attorneys, the firm will have difficulty making progress in fund raising.

Very effective. The firm does everything they can to meet the needs of the clients we can serve.

I would say considering the expertise and professionalism of the staff and administration, very well, understatement, excellent

We meet immediate crisis needs for clients from a legal perspective.

In general, the volume of cases interferes with thoroughness

Lack of success in obtaining undesignated funds. We are not helping as many people who need us and greater funding, once capital management is accomplished, would allow us to serve more people

I think the Omaha office does an above-average job of representing clients with the resources we have.

The Access Line does the very best they can with each client even if we can't send the case on.

I think we do a good job determining what we can reasonably expect to do and then doing it.

We strive to provide quality services in a timely manner. Our clients have many non-legal issues that we cannot resolve, but we try to provide information about community services.

In terms of the limited number of people who we can represent as they are within limited priorities, I believe that we are effective at meeting their needs. I think we are knowledgeable and do a good job/the best job we are able to do when we have limited resources

Good, and the only game in town for the poor.

I can only comment on the Norfolk office, but I believe we are effective and have a strong reputation in the legal community for getting the job done right.

c. Judges

1. Which of the following Legal Aid of Nebraska offices is nearest to you?

	n	%
Lincoln	16	31.4
Omaha	13	25.5
Scottsbluff	6	11.8
Grand Island	5	9.8
Norfolk	4	7.8
North Platte	4	7.8
Bancroft	3	5.9

2. In your opinion, what are the three most critical needs (civil legal services) among Nebraska residents who qualify, according to federal poverty guidelines, for Legal Aid services?

Domestic relations	18
Divorce	11
Landlord/Tenant matters	9
Custody	9
Housing	6
Collections	6
Protection orders	6
Child support	6
Dissolution	5
Family law	3
Discrimination	3
Employment issues	3
Collection cases for medical expenses	2
Welfare benefits	2
Paternity	2

The following received one mention each:

Bankruptcy claims concerning insurance companies and mortgage lenders

Suits or damages to rental property (apartment, etc.) after eviction

Services in small rural communities

Criminal

Don't know guidelines

Funding and availability of legal offices for Legal Aid

Restitution or premises

Access to entitlements (housing, medical, etc.)

Bankruptcy
 Civil defense on medical expenses
 Finances
 Representation
 Restitutions
 Probate
 Medical care
 Social security benefits
 Defense of default judgments in collection cases
 Accessing government programs
 Alcohol and drug related criminal defense
 Medicaid/Medicare eligibility
 Parenting issues
 I am in criminal court and rarely see Legal Aid lawyers
 Debt collection
 More guardian ad litem.
 Visitation

I don't really understand this question. The most critical need is legal service that can respond quickly to the needs. Too often I hear the individual is on a waiting list.
 Having two Legal Aids so that both parties can be represented without conflict
 Debtor/creditor relationships, family law matters (divorce, alimony, child support, parental rights), housing issues.

This varies on an ad hoc basis. There are not middle income people under 45 years who have adequate representation in any area. All of those who do not fit in the middle or upper income category live elsewhere.

Lawyers. Some way to balance when one party has legal aid services and other cannot afford attorney.

3. In your opinion, are these civil legal needs being met?

	n	%
Yes	9	19.1
Why?		

The following received one mention each:

Legal Aid attorneys do a good job

Given the resources

Lawyer volunteers

Somewhat, at least for one of the parents

Local director/attorney is more than capable in court. Whether or not she can meet demand is unknown to me.

By legal services and pro bono services

No	38	80.9
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Why?

Insufficient resources/funding	5
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Not enough lawyers	4
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The following received one mention each:

Legal Aid seldom comes to Buffalo County – people not informed of availability

Protection order applicants need representation when the respondent requests a hearing

Most poor in small towns have no access

Lack of attorney interest

Never see Legal Aid in these counties (county court)

Insufficient qualified lawyers to help them

Not addressed by legal services

Not enough resources available. Distances too great

Attorneys find and think there are conflicts preventing Legal Aid from taking them

Many litigants don't know how to access Legal Aid

Never seem to qualify for your services

Only one organization exists

I frequently hear in court that Legal Aid wouldn't help me. I have no way of knowing if that's true.

Too many divorces are not properly handled, even if Legal Aid lends assistance.

Volume

It seems to be a numbers game, not enough legal resources to cover demand

The response is an oxymoron

Too little time to devote to lengthy discovery cases and complex trials

Legal Aid already represents parents (PBI) needs in cases

The two area offices no longer allow travel that is more than one hour. By definition, no one gets served.

Cost

Service providers are overwhelmed

4. Please check what, in your view, are the three biggest challenges (other than legal services) faced by residents of Nebraska who qualify for Legal Aid services.

	n	%
Divorce	21	13.5

Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, utilities)	18	11.5
Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)	15	9.6
Child support	14	9.0
Domestic violence	13	8.3
Employment	13	8.3
Child custody	12	7.7
Job training	8	5.1
Alcohol/drug abuse	7	4.5
Education	7	4.5
Child care	6	3.8
Transportation	6	3.8
Health care	5	3.2
Other	4	2.6
Welfare/Benefits	3	1.9
Immigration status	2	1.3
Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)	1	0.6
Guardianship	1	0.6

5. What are the three greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

Competent, capable lawyers	7
Dedication/Commitment	5
Responsiveness	4
High quality	3
Good lawyers	2
Don't know	2
Efficiency	2
Availability to clients	2

The following received one mention each:

800 line

Don't see Legal Aid in this area (Cass, Otoe)

There is at least one attorney who has a great deal of experience

Having a physical presence

Divorce clinics

Preparation

They do solid work
 Insufficient experience (single case in 8 years on bench) to respond
 I don't recall ever seeing Legal Aid in my courtroom
 Great leadership
 I never see Legal Aid in my court even when it appears the party would be qualified to have those services.
 Good lawyers who work for little or less
 Personnel
 The good people it employs, patience, persistence
 Willingness to help, knowledge, dependability
 Not overwhelmed by huge case load, able to assist when asked
 Jennifer Gaughn is a very dedicated, capable attorney
 Volunteer lawyers and organizational structure
 They help those who cannot obtain services anywhere else
 Knowledgeable attorneys
 Good use of appropriate forms
 Preparedness

6. What are the three greatest weaknesses of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

Not enough attorneys/staff to meet the needs	12
Insufficient funding	7
Don't know	2

The following received one mention each:

Not providing services
 Failure to develop rural service delivery strategy after the 800 line
 Don't come to these counties (Cass, Otoe) or appear in county court
 No extensive experience outside of domestic relations
 Not available here
 Not enough lawyers, conflicts which prevent representation.
 Frequently when one party needs representation, so does the other
 Not enough support for domestic cases
 Not a broad enough range of acceptable case types
 Time limits
 Attorneys are skilled. Inexperience
 Lack of access
 Spread too thin
 Distances to courts

Lack of respect by clients

The existence of spurious providers of advice. The existence of misnamed agencies funded by tax dollars which diverts time and funding away from disciplined systems

Client load. Restrictions on types of problems to deal with

Access to counsel

Can't assist on criminal cases

In the "frontiers" areas of NE, no agency that delivers a service to the poor has been able to serve the isolated poor. Legal Aid has the "hub concept." If the service is in North Platte or Scottsbluff, the map says everyone is served. In reality, no services exist outside of the county that the office is in. There are enough problems in the "hub county" to use all the resources. The people who live in the "hub county" develop relationships with other professional service providers in the "hub city." The result is that the "hub city" has all the services (medical, mental health, respite care, detox, inpatient mental health, outpatient substance abuse, domestic violence, programs, anger management, probation resources, juvenile detention, area aging services. Nothing exists in the smaller town. Then transportation does not exist. So, people just muck along as best they can.

7. In your opinion, on what services or areas of concern should Legal Aid of Nebraska focus if resources are limited?

Domestic relations	8
Divorce	5
Child custody	5
Child support	4
Housing issues	2
Family law	2
Immigration	2
Employment	2
Landlord/tenant	2
Substance abuse	2
Don't know	2

The following received one mention each:

Dissolution

Rural poor

Housing

Guardianship/conservatorship

Welfare and social security

Default judgments

Transportation

Need to make sure both parents in custody matters have adequate legal representation

Legislation or court rule changes which address “underlying” or “conceptual” shortfalls and gaining insight into the inherent nature of the shortfall, or alternately, the grand view.

Financial issues

It is hard to say what they should focus on. They are all important. But I feel matters concerning children are the most important

Creative system to deliver services to the isolated poor. Consider lawsuits to force government agencies to serve the poor in isolated areas. Consider ways to connect the residents of the poorest counties to join together for a voice. Educate people, decisions makers about the similarities between inner city Omaha poor and rural isolated poor.

Poor people have the same problems wherever they live. The solution may look different.

Collection

Financial service education

Protection orders

8. Based on what you know about Legal Aid of Nebraska, would you say the firm is adequately funded?

	n	%
Yes	0	0.0
No	35	68.6
Why?		
Need more lawyers/staff.	6	
Never will be funded enough.	2	
Limited funding/need more.	2	
More funding is necessary to retain experienced attorneys.		2
I see a lot of poor people who do not have legal representation.		2
Seem to maintain presence in metropolitan areas.	2	

The following received one mention each:

Many people say they seek services and the waiting lists, etc. cannot be coped with.

We have no resources.

Tremendous need in providing more comprehensive services so that clients are less prone to being mismanaged or under-managed in their legal actions

Need more and better attorneys on staff. Shouldn't be a training ground for new

attorneys. Should pay enough to attract good attorneys and keep them

Legal assistance is expensive

Only one attorney for extended service area

Too many pro se litigants

It has no teeth

There is no way that the money given can adequately reach all of the need

I've seen the local office continually reduce in size (number of attorneys) since 1982

I just know the demand is there for more services than can presently be provided

Some in need can't get representation

Don't know 12 23.5

c. Attorneys

1. Which of the following Legal Aid of Nebraska offices is nearest to you?

	n	%
Omaha	13	38.2
Lincoln	12	35.3
Grand Island	3	8.8
North Platte	3	8.8
Norfolk	2	5.9
Scottsbluff	1	2.9
Bancroft	0	0.0

2. In your opinion, what are the three most critical needs (civil legal services) among Nebraska residents who qualify, according to federal poverty guidelines, for Legal Aid services?

Housing	11
Divorce	11
Landlord/Tenant	10
Domestic relations	8
Custody	6
Bankruptcy	4
Child support	4
Visitation	3
Dissolution	3
Public benefits	3
Personal finance	2
Worker's compensation	2
Criminal	2
Collectors/Creditors	2
Family law	2
Employment-related issues/law	2

The following received one mention each:

Elder issues
Protection orders
Personal injury
Paternity
Predatory lending practices
Foreclosure

Low-income divorces

Have no idea

Debt problems

Immigration work

The main problem is the polarization of society and in Nebraska, this means the republican “haves” will continue to erode services for the less fortunate. If the “Christians” actually followed Christ’s teachings, then no problems.

3. In your opinion, are these civil legal needs being met?

	n	%
Yes	6	17.6
Why?		

The following received one mention each:

Legal Aid or Creighton Law School legal clinic

I think we all do what we can, there is no clear answer

Generally people in need are helped. Some manipulate the system

No	16	47.1
Why?		

Not enough resources. 3

The following received one mention each:

Overworked and understaffed, more needs than persons to fill

More attorneys could take on more cases

Need exceeds opportunities for low-cost resources

Not enough non-profit law firms in Nebraska

Unique and specialized areas of practice

Too many cases

Time on divorce seems long

Not enough clients seem to qualify

Misperception among members of public that Legal Aid attorneys are somehow not as “good” as private attorneys. Demand exceeds ability to provide services.

New attorney law – increased costs of filing and counseling requirements

Unfortunately more cases than assistance. Our office does a lot of social security benefit and overpayment cases but we know people are desperate for assistance and either rare conflicted out by other presentation or can’t wait for the assistance that can be provided.

4. Please check what, in your view, are the three biggest challenges (other than legal services) faced by residents of Nebraska who qualify for Legal Aid services.

	n	%
Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)	21	20.4
Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)	14	13.6
Divorce	12	11.7
Child support	10	9.7
Domestic violence	6	5.8
Job training	6	5.8
Employment	6	5.8
Child custody	5	4.9
Alcohol/drug abuse	4	3.9
Health care	4	3.9
Child care	4	3.9
Education	3	2.9

The following received one mention each:

Transportation
Welfare/benefits
Business credit and financial issues
Food/clothing
Immigration status
School enrollment for children
Unemployment or worker's compensation
Other
External communications

5. What are the three greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

Don't know	4
Dedication and competence of staff	4
Good attorneys	3

The following received one mention each:

Location
Spanish-speaking staff
Highly skilled attorneys
Responsive to local needs
Willingness to seek help from local private attorneys
Excellent advocacy

Timeliness

Empathy

People, attorneys, leadership

Accessibility

I don't know them that well. They appear to work hard for clients

Attorneys' knowledge and level of commitment

Staff

Visibility in the community

They do an excellent job for the clients they represent

Good in the areas of special practice Legal Aid is involved in

Caring attorneys and staff

Free/limited costs, answer questions, guidance

Understanding of the needs in a democratic society, moral superiority.

Organized delivery of resources, competent, passionate attorneys

Help resolve negative domestic situations, help with juvenile law, dedication of employees.

Attorney and staff are outstanding, pleasant and easy to deal with.

6. What are the three greatest weaknesses of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

Not enough attorneys 9

Lack of funding 7

Caseload 4

Don't know 3

Lack of visibility 2

The following received one mention each:

Inexperience of attorney staff

Size of attorney staff

Access

Population not served

Not taking possible fee generating cases

Being located in Nebraska

Being "looked down upon"

Overworked, inexperienced

Too many poor people, Bush administration

Limited scope of cases and practice

Turnover of staff

Waiting times, inability to provide services

Case screening

Inability to meet demand for services, inability to overcome perception that Legal Aid attorneys are not as “good” as private attorneys.

Demand for services exceeds resources, not enough time to allocate to long-term resolution of delivery of services to needy, coordination of fund-raising efforts.

Simple conflicts. In a divorce one party goes to Legal Aid and the other party must hire one.

Clients who do not try to help themselves or cooperate with Legal Aid or courts.

7. In your opinion, on what services or areas of concern should Legal Aid of Nebraska focus if resources are limited?

Housing	6
Domestic relations	5
Child support	4
Personal finance	3
Divorce	3
Don't know	3
Child custody	2
Domestic violence	2
Employment	2
Elder issues	2
Landlord/Tenant	2

The following received one mention each:

Collectors

External communications, internal communications

Unemployment

Providing services

Dissolution

Protection orders

Health care

Consumer issues such as truth in lending and predatory lending

Matters in which children are at risk and/or involved

Children

Family law

Welfare benefits

Helping the most indigent with children

Getting those who qualify for Legal Aid in a position where they don't qualify – enough

training, education

8. Based on what you know about Legal Aid of Nebraska, would you say the firm is adequately funded?

	n	%
Yes	2	6.7
Why?		
Legal Aid does good and pro bono	1	
No	10	29.4

Why?

The following received one mention each:

Demand exceeds ability to service clients

Turn potential clients away due to lack of funding

Only 14% of eligible clients served

More cases than current staff can handle

Lack of funding

Not enough staff

Can't seem to keep the lawyers they get, not enough attorneys to staff the needs that exist

We live in a "red" state and Republicans simply are heartless compared to normal people

Legal and importance of work needs more funding to accomplish more for more persons in need

Don't know	18	52.9
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d. Human Services Providers

Organizations Responding (listed here as written on surveys)

Mary Catherine McAuley Center for Women and Families (formerly known as St. Vincent de Paul Homeless Family Shelter).

The Bridge, Inc.

Community Action of Mid-Nebraska Franklin County

McCook Pantry

Garden County Community Food

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Siena House

Bright Horizons

Nebraska City Food Pantry

Western Community Health Services

HEART Program

Truell, Murray & Mason

Omaha Campus of Hope Dual Diagnosis

SASA Crisis Center

SENCA

Blue Valley Community Action Partnership

St. John Lutheran Church – Seward

Civil Clinical Law Program

Health and Human Services

Burford Law Office/Metro Vol Guardians

United Way

NDHHS

HHS

HHS - Omaha

HHS – Grand Island

HHSS – Scottsbluff

HHS – North Platte

Nebraska Health and Human Services

HHS – North Platte

Nebraska Health and Human Services System (Lincoln local)

HHS – Norfolk

Community Pantry & Emergency Services

CISDA, Inc.

Cass County Veterans Service Office
 Crisis Center - Fremont
 Omaha Housing Authority
 East Central District Health Department – WIC Program
 Renaissance Health Center
 Volunteers Intervening for Equity
 Nebraska Children’s Home Society
 Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging – ENOA
 Family Housing Advisory Services, Inc.
 Cedars Family Violence Services
 Sandhills Educational Services Cooperative
 Central Health Center
 Family Health Services, Inc. WIC
 The Resolution Center
 Sandhills Crisis Intervention Program
 Family Rescue Services
 People’s Family Health Family Planning
 People’s Family Health WIC
 Lincoln – Lancaster County Health Department WIC program
 Nebraska Appleseed Center
 Center for Conflict Resolution
 Early Childhood Center – Neligh Head Start
 Panhandle Community Services Health Center
 Nebraska Aids Project
 Hastings Family Planning (Reproductive Health Care)
 Crossroads Center Rescue Mission
 Nebraska State Bar Association – Volunteer Lawyers Project
 AAA Crisis Pregnancy Center
 Holy Family Catholic Church
 Rape Spouse Abuse Crisis Center
 Center for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Survivors
 The Salvation Army – Hastings

1. Which of the following Legal Aid of Nebraska offices is nearest to you?

	n	%
Omaha	22	25.9
Lincoln	16	18.8

Grand Island	16	18.8
Scottsbluff	11	12.9
North Platte	11	12.9
Norfolk	9	10.6
Bancroft	0	0.0

2. Please indicate the primary population your organization serves.

Families (low-income)	60	16.7
Women	58	16.1
Seniors	40	11.1
Persons with disabilities	37	10.3
Ethnic/Racial/Cultural groups	37	10.3
Men	33	9.2
Youth	32	8.9
Family (special needs)	26	7.2
Students	24	6.7
Other	13	3.6
Domestic violence/sexual assault victims	2	
Women, infants and children (5 and under)	2	

The following received one mention each:

Domestic and sexual violence victims and their families
Santee Sioux Nation
Domestic violence survivors
Veterans of military services and family
Battered women
People affected by HIV
Homeless
Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and abuse
Farm families

3. What is the primary age of the consumers served by your organization?

	n	%
17 and under	34	13.6
18-24	44	17.6
25-34	57	22.8
35-50	50	20.0
51-60	30	12.0

60 or older	35	14.0
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4. What are the types of direct or indirect services provided by your organization?

	n	%
Information and referral	68	13.1
Emergency services (housing, food, clothing)	54	10.4
Case management	44	8.5
Family support	40	7.7
Financial assistance	39	7.5
Transportation	38	7.3
Government program for the poor	31	6.0
Counseling services	30	5.8
Employment assistance	29	5.6
Housing	25	4.8
Health care	24	4.6
Child care (including Head Start)	22	4.2
Education assistance	20	3.8
Legal services	20	3.8
Discrimination assistance	5	1.0
Job training	14	2.7
Recreation	6	1.2

The following received one mention each:

Therapeutic community
Protection order assistance, 24-hour help line and support groups
Food stamps, Medicaid, cash assistance
All county, state and federal veterans benefits
Referral services
Mediation, parent education
Parenting classes
24-hours victim assistance
Pregnancy testing
Food pantry
Reproductive health
Conflict resolution/mediation/facilitation
Ryan White/HUD housing, opportunities for people with AIDs
WIC, family planning, many referrals to other areas of need.

5. In your opinion, what are the three most critical needs (civil legal services) of your clients

who qualify, according to federal poverty guidelines, for Legal Aid services?

Divorce	30
Child custody	22
Child support services	17
Housing	16
Landlord/tenant	10
Protection order – related cases	8
Disability	8
Bankruptcy	7
Employment matters	6
Creditors	6
Financial	4
Legal advice on family matters	3
Welfare representation	3
Health care dollars	2
Domestic relations issues	2
Domestic violence	2
Criminal	2

The following received one mention each:

Medical benefits

How to manage their income (don't know Legal Aid services guidelines)

Legal representation for those appearing in tribal court

Child custody hearing and legal representation, ICWA

Social Security help

High quality representation in court

Awareness of legal rights and remedies

Economic opportunity

Outstanding warrants

Income

Living wills – tax exemptions

Shut off notices, keep on

Utility bills owed, past can't get new service

Our clients need help with immigration issues

Guardianship/conservator

Illegal ousters

Assistance appealing Social Security rejections

Accessibility

Language
 Sexual harassment
 Immigration status
 Legal representation and/or advice
 Visitations
 Corporate responsibility to preserve law and order
 Civil liberties
 Constitutional rights
 Consumer
 Income maintenance
 Paternity rights
 Substance abuse
 Help with wills
 Getting answers to legal questions quickly to help them get their children out of state custody and know their rights

6. In your opinion, are these civil legal needs being met?

	n	%
Yes	14	16.5
Why?		
Legal Aid, Pat Ford	2	

The following received one mention each:

Legal Services and private attorneys
 Nebraska Legal Aid, Volunteer Lawyer Project, Laptop Project
 Appeals of SSA, MA, MC and public housing within scope of LSC
 Time is a problem, but most clients are represented
 Inadequately, some have conflict of interest, lack of staff availability
 I think so, referral services

Referrals

Partial

No	44	51.8
Why?		

The following received one mention each:

Not enough lawyers who will do pro bono or not enough who are able to assist low-income persons
 Lack of infrastructure, pride, lack of awareness of process
 They don't know their rights

Not enough income to do privately
 Not enough slots
 Difficult for people to find services, get to Scottsbluff. Either no money for gas or no car at all.
 Difficulty assessing services, clients that don't "fit" service definition.
 It has gotten much easier for clients to get in contact with Nebraska Legal Aid; however, if they are conflicted, it is very long process to get them assistance. Also, issues involving interstate divorce and custody are also problematic.
 Lack of attorneys without charge, lack of knowledge of services and where to get them.
 I'm still seeing people with their needs unmet.
 Too few providers.
 We do not have any local resources.
 Refer to available resource, Legal Aid. Clients don't always follow through.
 Not always especially when it comes to child support and custody.
 Not enough attorneys at Legal Aid; weak laws.
 Vets can't always afford legal fees.
 Only a small percentage of our clients seek out legal representation.
 Even though there are clients here legally, they are afraid of government and afraid to ask for help.
 Not enough funding or staff to meet needs.
 Legal Aid does not have resources adequate to meet the need.
 Immediate help is often not available
 They are unable to afford
 Far too many are being denied services
 Legal Aid does not have enough staff in North Platte to cover all the needs.
 For a while there was no money in our area.
 Distance to access services
 Client not able to efficiently navigate system. Time commitment.
 The demand is higher than services available
 Lack of will power
 Child support is legally required but parent usually can't be tracked down or just does not pay
 Not many know of your agency
 Not enough Legal Aid staff available
 Lack of resources
 I don't think so, probably due to attorney costs
 Yes, at the senior center, but not available to those who don't attend there.

Cost and availability in rural area

When clients approved, great services. Lately a lot of clients declined

Don't know	6	7.1
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7. Please check what, in your view, are the three biggest challenges (other than legal services) faced by your clients who qualify for Legal Aid services.

	n	%
Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)	56	16.0
Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)	36	10.3
Domestic violence	26	7.4
Employment	26	7.4
Alcohol/drug abuse	25	7.1
Health care	21	6.0
Child support	20	5.7
Welfare/benefits	19	5.4
Divorce	16	4.6
Child custody	15	4.3
Transportation	14	4.0
Child care	10	2.9
Education	9	2.6
Immigration status	9	2.6
Food/clothing	8	2.3
Job training	7	2.0
Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)	7	2.0
Guardianship	7	2.0
Insurance	7	2.0
Unemployment or worker's compensation	3	0.9
Elder abuse (physical, financial)	2	0.6
Business credit and financial issues	2	0.6
Wills/trusts/estate planning	2	0.6
Other	2	0.6
Taxes	1	0.3

8. In the past year, have you referred any of your clients to Legal Aid of Nebraska for legal services?

	n	%
Yes	63	74.1
How many?		
1	5	
10	4	
Many	3	
4	2	
4 or 5	2	
6	2	
20	2	
2	2	
3	1	

The following received one mention each:

4, but Legal Aid couldn't help

Approximately 5 to 10 times

8 to 10

12

At least 12

15-20

20 or more

No idea, I'd say at least 20

At least 25

27

30

35

25 to 50

50

50+

50-60

50 (plus 11 to Iowa Legal Aid) in 2005

At least 100 if not more

100+

150

433

More than 1,000

Dozens

Too numerous to count.

We refer on a daily basis.

Many, I refer at least 10 a year. There are 9 workers in our office.

I don't track referrals, some not clients, they just call for your number.

Did not count, refer people on daily basis (est. 200-300/year).

A few, mostly via phone information.

Don't know	3	
No	21	24.7

Why?

Don't know what you will cover/services

you provide	4	
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The following received one mention each:

Because response is either very slow or non-existent

We do not know their income. We help anyone who asks. We are run by religious ministerial organization, not legal services

Lack of availability/access information

Couldn't get through, clients' needs didn't fit

Not easy to talk to or get assistance

I have referred them to Salvation Army Emergency Services.

Probably not, most already know about

We ask all callers if contacted Legal Aid, if yes, we take application. If no, they are told to call Legal Aid before we take application.

No opportunities, other than legal adoption questions

9. To your knowledge, were your clients' legal needs met?

	n	%
Yes	13	15.3

How? (One mention each):

Yes, for some; no for some – Legal Aid unable to take their cases.

Except when there was a conflict.

For the most part.

No	13	15.3
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Why? (One mention each):

Lack of representation – cannot afford to pay. Local courts operate on fixed budget

Legal Aid couldn't help

Wasn't an area Legal Aid wanted to work on.

Some had conflicts due to husband's contact.

Not enough funding/staff to address some issues.

Didn't meet requirements; took too long.
 Was told made slightly over income qualifying criteria.
 Lack of personnel, conflict of interest issues, problem doesn't meet Legal Aid's criteria.
 Were denied because Legal Aid staff not enough time to serve clients.
 Were unable to get a hold of someone to help or changed their minds.
 Some were, some were not eligible due to income, partners use of Legal Aid.
 It is almost impossible to get assistance from Legal Aid.
 Don't know 54 63.5

10. What are the three greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

Competent and caring attorneys	6
Local	3
Committed/dedicated attorneys and staff	3
Knowledgeable attorneys/staff	3
Accessibility	3
Great attorneys/staff	2
Great understanding of domestic violence	2

The following received one mention each:

Stability/longevity of staff
 Quality of legal work
 Availability
 Unknown, not much contact with them
 Free legal aid for qualified veterans
 Quality to represent without client funds
 Work with low-income people
 Provide hope for families
 Telephone access for rural area persons
 The fact it's here
 There for folks – good advocacy
 Rapport with HHS staff/personally-acquainted/commitment
 Bilingual services, toll free number/state wide access, high quality staff
 Desire to do good
 Location in Scottsbluff
 Expensive
 Professional
 Understand circumstances of poor people
 Practical

Front-line attorneys' devotion to assisting poor
 Community collaborations
 Cost, close to towns where needed
 Great working relationship with our agency
 Pat Ford
 The willingness to develop new program to meet senior needs.
 Ability to handle evictions quickly once client accepted
 Bilingual capability
 Ability to handle social security appeals
 Attempt to help
 Qualifications
 Location
 Preparing clients for court – step by state directions for cases. Review of case with
 clients – depth interview.
 No-cost services to those at mercy of landlords.
 Advocate, help people when evicted wrongly, help meet legal needs when not
 financially able to do in private sector.
 Unsure – know very little about what they do, who qualifies. What services they offer.
 Maybe our agency needs to have presentation on your services.
 Attorneys are friendly, easy for clients to apply for help, aggressive representation.
 When they do take a case, the burden lifted off our client.
 I do not usually have personal contact so I don't know about assets or strengths. I am
 grateful to be able to have this resource to refer clients to.
 I would like to know what services are available and how to connect and what services
 we might use at a clinic.
 Not able to answer as we have had no direct contact with them since central access line
 limited.
 The attorney is wonderful. She gets domestic violence and is very nice to clients and
 understanding.
 It's good for low-income individuals when you get someone working with you clients, it
 goes very well.
 Don't know 12

11. What are the three greatest weaknesses of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?
- | | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Not enough attorneys/staff | 19 |
| Limited resources | 10 |
| Don't know | 9 |

Requirements/Guidelines restrictive	6
Increase awareness of service	6
Can't get through AccessLine to contact	
Legal Aid	5
Too far away	5
High caseload	5
Limited time	3
Conflict status	3
Lack of presence	2
Time to place client with attorney	2
Response time	2
Not returning calls, no response	2

The following received one mention each:

Interagency interaction
 Availability/accessibility
 Having to begin by the telephone system/automated system from Lincoln.
 Complicated intake process
 Drug/alcohol influence of services
 "Fit" of services
 Clients always tell us they can't access these services, get turned down
 I have no knowledge of this area
 Unknown other than unable to help with illegal immigrants
 Lack of follow through
 Unhelpful results
 Need more staff and information geared toward seniors
 Location does not have good parking
 More Legal Aid staff is needed in North Platte
 Clients get discouraged
 Fear of the legal system of disadvantaged
 Lack of time to cover work area
 Providing outreach information, working with programs such as ours
 Capacity to handle the demand for services
 Lack of knowledge by community of services provided
 Over reliance on tapes as substitute for legal representation
 Don't serve wide enough population
 Acknowledgement not everyone is being served by them
 Coverage is too large

Not in the area, don't know any one there, don't even know phone number any more,
lengthy intake

New attorneys do not have as much knowledge of domestic violence issues

Many call you because they know the other then won't be able to get assistance.

It is very difficult for seniors to access and understand what they need to do to address
their legal issues.

Legal Aid needs attorneys/paralegals dedicated to seniors and their issues (home visits
for homebound would be great).

Have program areas that are duplication of other agencies or could be referred to
others.

Access – the toll free number statewide and waiting time is a barrier, walk-in service
should be allowed.

12. In your opinion, on what services or areas of concern should Legal Aid of Nebraska focus
if resources are limited?

Domestic violence	13
Custody	11
Housing	9
Divorce	8
Child support	6
Don't know	4
Disability	3
Personal finance	3
Welfare benefits	2
Discrimination	2
Employment matters	2
Domestic relations	2

The following received one mention each:

Dispute settlements, employer or landlord/tenant

Finding more staff

Any that help clients become more self-sufficient

Access to health care i.e. so person then able to work

Landlord/tenant

Improving financial circumstances of clients

Systems change

Concerns of poor people – basic needs issues

Guardianship

Providing more than just advice
 Gaining resources
 Help with benefits
 Social security issues
 Broadening qualification
 More timely assistance
 No opinion – you and your clients are in the best position to know this
 Youth advocacy
 Health care
 Safety issues and basic needs
 Husband evicted – leave women and kids in home
 Focus on families
 Issues of client safety
 My bias is health care, but I do not know how that affects Legal Aid
 Children
 Lowering requirements – I know that means more attorneys
 More people to answer questions and provide information
 Prioritize calls and take applications from most critical or with cases pending at least. It seems that staff could assist in this process. Look at substandard housing that landlords rent to people and then refuse to fix things; payee for mental health clients that don't have guardians; help people apply/process of disability.
 Rural, underdeveloped regions where Legal Aid cannot be afforded or unavailable.
 We understand about limited resources! We would like to see more concentration on advertising in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Too many people don't realize Legal Aid can help them.
 Home visits for disabled or homebound seniors. Legal forms – POA – advance directives, etc. in easy to understand language that could be mass produced for seniors.
 Conservator/Guardianship assistance
 Helping low-income women get quality divorces. Help with financial issues
 Protecting children who are unable to protect themselves when they live in homes with parents who are chemically addicted, etc.

13. Based on what you know about Legal Aid of Nebraska, would you say the firm is adequately funded?

	n	%
Yes	2	2.4

Why? (One mention):

I don't think the funding is the problem. Maybe they need more staff for non-legal

concerns.

No	36	42.4
Why?		
Not enough attorneys/staff	6	

The following received one mention each:

They are not able to take all cases of need.

Lincoln County and surrounding counties need legal help (are low-income) and you need more staff so needs can be met.

Legal Aid not widely visible with media

Not beginning to meet legal needs of the poor, has been underfunded by federal government for years

Always a need for more services for low-income individuals

Can't serve enough clients

Limited resources directly tied to funding issues

Have to limit representation/areas

Feedback from clients

Many rural communities are part of the larger city offices and there are limitations on local assistance, barriers to traveling.

I am not familiar enough

As our population has aged the needs have grown.

Clients generally can't even get through to Legal Aid to ask for help.

Too many people with too many legal needs, but limited money to fund their legal needs.

I don't think there are enough funds. Why would they run out of funding before the end of the year?

Because it has to decline clients.

Thousands who qualify are not served, especially domestic relations.

Demand exceeds availability.

More people could be served.

Can't serve wide enough client base. "Poverty guidelines" not an accurate guide, not reality based.

Cannot serve many people because of staff/money shortage.

No, however, a lot of non-profits are adequately funded.

Consistently cutting services in area since began project in 1995.

Never enough to serve our poor adequately.

If money were no object and I was asked for my opinion on what I would like to have available for my clients, I would have to say that it would be so helpful to have a helpline

that providers could access for advice. I so often get questions about what a conservator can or cannot legally do. Where do they call to get answers to a general question of legal nature. If our case manager/social workers have a question about the legality of an issue, there is no where they as providers can call without our non-profit agency paying for an attorney's time. There is also the difficulty of getting a straight answer to a general question because they are afraid of the liability and don't want the responsibility of anyone calling back and questioning the answer they gave. So if we had an access or helpline for providers it would save us a lot of time and resources.

Don't know

42

49.4

Phase III – Focus Groups

Focus groups for the most part provide qualitative information. However, some quantitative information was gathered during these sessions. This quantitative information is included in a section of this report that is made up of summary charts. However, because the sample sizes were so small, extreme caution should be used in drawing conclusions from any of this quantitative data.

The major value of the focus group portion of the Needs Assessment is that we reached groups that might not be properly represented in the telephone survey sample. In addition, the focus groups gave Legal Aid of Nebraska attorneys opportunities to hear feedback from members of the population served by the firm. Reports on each of the 10 focus groups follow.

CHALLENGES

Prominently mentioned challenges included racial discrimination in access to housing, in employment, in the public school system and on the part of law enforcement. Parents in the group said their children face overt and covert racism in the community's schools. They described instances of school records being lost, inattention to the academic progress of their children, and lack of achievement-oriented encouragement on the part of school staff. One parent said her attempts to ensure her child's success involved an "everyday battle with the school."

Other challenges cited included general financial difficulties, stemming from lack of educational and employment opportunity, and child custody and child support issues.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

A participant said there are too few Hispanic business owners in the Scottsbluff-Gering area. Others said that lack of educational opportunity makes it difficult to qualify for jobs with adequate compensation. Others said that even if Hispanic residents were able to attain good educations, good jobs would still be lacking. Participants also cited a cycle in which public assistance programs penalize low-income individuals who are employed. Many mentioned a difficult-to-navigate maze of rules and regulations regarding employment assistance programs, housing, medical care and mental health counseling. In addition, participants said, Scottsbluff-Gering has no homeless shelter, making life particularly tough for those without homes.

AWARENESS

Seven of nine participants were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to participate in the focus group. Here is the breakdown of answers to the question about how they had heard of Legal Aid:

Referral from family, friend	5
Referral by police	1
News media mention	1

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

Issues mentioned when participants were asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney:

- Erroneous criminal record
- Child custody (three mentions)
- Domestic violence
- Discrimination in public schools (two mentions)

CHALLENGES

Overwhelmingly, participants in this group cited financial difficulties as the greatest challenge they face. Participants said wages in North Platte are low. They also cited a public assistance system that penalizes them for gaining increases in income. “Once you are able to get on your feet (financially),” one person said, “they take their aid away.” The minimum wage, for which many in the group work, is not enough to even pay for food, several participants said.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

Lack of education and educational opportunity, as well as racial and age discrimination in employment, were cited as the major causes of poverty in the North Platte area. One 73-year-old participant said that she went back to work (for a State of Nebraska agency) after finding that she could not live on the retirement income available to her. Even now, she said, she cannot afford health insurance and she doesn’t qualify for public assistance. Most participants said providing more educational opportunity is the main solution to the poverty problem. They cited a job training program in North Platte that ceased due to lack of funding.

AWARENESS

Five of 16 participants were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to participate in the focus group. Here is the breakdown of answers to the question about how they had heard of Legal Aid:

Knew a Legal Aid employee	5
Phone book	2
Through job	1
Referral by HHS	1

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

Issues mentioned when participants were asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney:

- Education/discrimination in schools (five mentions)
- Grandparent rights / child support (three mentions)
- Planning for aging/financial planning (three mentions)
- Disability/access to medical care (three mentions)
- Help with a will (two mentions)
- Property tax increases

CHALLENGES

Issues most often cited as challenges by participants included child support, disputes with landlords, and racist or disrespectful treatment by neighbors. Participants also said they had problems with residency issues, and one cited a long-running contractual dispute. Male participants who cited child support issues said that courts have ordered them to pay unreasonable amounts. Females cited problems in getting child support payments from the fathers of their children. The landlord disputes that were mentioned included failure to properly maintain property, and suspected dishonesty about various fees that are charged in addition to rent. Participants said they need assistance in determining their rights in such disputes. Participants said they were harassed by neighbors who often report them to Lincoln police without cause. One participant said that the tires on her husband's vehicle were flattened, and she suspected neighbors were responsible. Another participant cited difficulty in getting health care for children.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

Residency issues and the language barrier were cited as major causes of poverty among Lincoln people of Hispanic descent. Two of the participants said that they had applied for residency permits 10 years ago, and they have never heard an understandable explanation for the delay in processing their applications. Participants said people without legitimate resident status and without English language skills are constantly fearful of losing their jobs. Such individuals also are fearful of speaking up for their rights on the job, according to participants. English classes are too expensive in Lincoln, and services such as the Literacy Council are unable to meet the need.

AWARENESS

Only one of the participants had heard about Legal Aid of Nebraska prior to being invited to join the focus group. That individual heard about Legal Aid of Nebraska through a referral from the Lincoln Action Program.

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

Issues mentioned when participants were asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney:

- Residency issues (five mentions)
- Contractual dispute
- Education
- Landlord dispute
- Child support

CHALLENGES

This group of nine women was quiet and somewhat disengaged. Two said employment was the major challenge. Others cited education, concern for grandchildren, and language problems.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

Improper citizenship documents, lack of employment and the language barrier were most often cited by this group. Three participants cited the citizenship documentation. Employment and language received two mentions each.

AWARENESS

Only one of the participants had heard about Legal Aid of Nebraska prior to being invited to join the focus group. That individual heard about Legal Aid of Nebraska from a friend who knew about the firm:

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

Issues mentioned when participants were asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney:

- Workplace problems
- Pregnancy
- Social Security
- Property claims
- Traffic issues
- Labor laws
- Crime prevention
- Immigration issues

CHALLENGES

This group of new arrivals to our country cited, for the most part, various difficulties in becoming acclimated to just about every aspect of life in the United States. The language barrier was cited as a major problem – almost everything else (job, housing, public education and aid) depends on an individual's ability to communicate. Participants said that instruction in English is either lacking or beyond financial reach for them. They also said that they are the victims of racist attitudes on the part of area residents. One participant said that she and her children are the object of false accusations to police by a neighbor. Others said that the Sudanese have so much difficulty finding housing that they simply leave the community in frustration. Those who do find housing, they said, engage in constant disputes with landlords, primarily over rent and related charges.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

Because of the language barrier, participants said, good jobs and education are not available to them. This was cited as the major cause of poverty among Sudanese refugees. Individuals who do find work, participants said, have difficulty holding on to jobs because they don't speak English, or they simply are the victims of racial discrimination and mistreatment. Sudanese people in Grand Island also do not know how to access systems that could provide them with financial assistance or guidance regarding work and/or school.

AWARENESS

Three of the participants were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to participate in the focus group. Here is the breakdown of answers to the question about how they had heard of Legal Aid:

Crisis line referral	1
Community center referral	1
Court referral	1

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

When asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney, here are the issues participants cited:

- Housing/landlord dispute (five mentions)
- Child support (three mentions)
- Unspecified school issues (two mentions)
- Help understanding hospital bills (two mentions)
- Help understand human services system
- Dispute over injury to child in school
- Workplace issues
- Name change

CHALLENGES

Participants cited various struggles with racial discrimination regarding access to medical care, legal assistance, financial assistance and housing. One participant told of the death of her 14-year-old son, who was injured while skate-boarding. She said that he was given a medication that she suspects caused his death, but she is unable to locate an attorney who will represent her. A second participant said that an ill relative was denied certain prescription medications while in jail. Participants said that the combination of low income and racial discrimination makes it difficult to find adequate housing for themselves or their families.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

Participants said lack of education and educational opportunities, and racial discrimination, combine to keep African-Americans in poverty in Omaha. They cited a cycle similar to that mentioned in other focus groups: A public aid system that is too quick to withdraw aid when a recipient becomes employed and starts earning an income. The aid programs are not very well administered, participants said. They also said that Omaha's African-American community does not support African-American business enterprises, making it difficult for entrepreneurs to succeed.

AWARENESS

Five of six participants were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to participate in the focus group. Here is the breakdown of answers to the question about how they had heard of Legal Aid:

Word of mouth	2
Phone book	1
Through job with state agency	1
News media mention	1

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

Issues mentioned when participants were asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney:

- Education/discrimination in schools (two mentions)
- Medical malpractice claim
- Credit problems/bankruptcy
- Child custody battle

CHALLENGES

A variety of financial challenges led the list cited in this group. There was much discussion of the public assistance system, which quickly withdraws aid for a recipient who finds a job and begins to earn an income. Participants said the aid is taken away too quickly, and a low-income job alone often does not provide enough to live on. Participants also cited difficulty with Health and Human Services caseworkers who are primarily white and from rural Nebraska. The caseworkers, participants say, are not familiar with diversity. Employment, access to transportation, an “overwhelmed” social services system, and access to adequate medical care were mentioned in connection with financial challenges. Participants said that even if they might suspect that an attorney could help them with a problem, they don’t really know when they need legal representation.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

Participants said a public assistance system that is disconnected from the realities of life fuels a poverty cycle in Lincoln. They also cited lack of employment and educational opportunities. One participants cited Medicaid eligibility guidelines as a factor.

AWARENESS

Eight of 10 participants were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to participate in the focus group. Here is the breakdown of answers to the question about how they had heard of Legal Aid:

Word of mouth	3
Through job	2
Referred by human services agency	3

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

This group did not have ready answers when asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney. One mentioned family and

juvenile law. Others said they would simply tell Legal Aid of Nebraska to do a better job of informing the community about its services.

CHALLENGES

Problems finding employment and adequate housing were mentioned most often by participants of this group. Other participants talked about lack of opportunities for young Native Americans, and one cited suicide worries.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

Lack of employment or low-paying employment, along with lack of education, were cited as causes of poverty in the area. It should be noted that members of this group represented several communities in northeast Nebraska. Other causes of poverty cited were misunderstanding of laws, lack of real-world training for young people, and lack of driver's license or transportation.

AWARENESS

Five of the participants were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to participate in the focus group. Here is the breakdown of answers to the question about how they had heard of Legal Aid:

In the courtroom	2
Attorney came to tribe	2
Referral by a friend	2

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

When asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney, participants said they would want advice on writing a will, Indian civil rights, credit issues and insurance.

CHALLENGES

Participants in this very engaged and vigorous group repeatedly cited problems with Child Protective Services. Several told stories of having their children taken from them with little or no cause, including a case of a newborn removed from the custody of the parents before the baby left the hospital. One participant said she had several children taken from her decades ago, and she has never seen them since. Participants said that they witness numerous violations of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and complained that it is difficult if not impossible to find an attorney with expertise in this area of the law. Also cited were problems finding decent employment, problems with low wages, access to adequate medical care, education and educational support services such as tutoring. Several participants mentioned problems on both sides of child-support cases. Some said they had difficulty making payments, others said they had difficulty collecting payments due to them. Some participants cited difficulty with the criminal justice system. Public defenders, they said, often simply tell Native Americans to plead guilty to charges, whether the charges have substance or not.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

In line with comments in other focus groups, participants said that public assistance programs are not configured to help people gain economic stability. Instead, they said, Native Americans are given poor advice. For instance, one individual said she was told that the best way to qualify for aid would be to get pregnant and have a baby. Participants described a difficult-to-understand maze of rules and regulations that discourage them from making proper use of the public assistance system. As with other groups, participants said that public assistance is withdrawn too quickly when an individual becomes employed and begins earning an income.

AWARENESS

Eight of the participants were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to participate in the focus group. Not all of the eight could say how they heard of Legal Aid of Nebraska. Among those who did know the source of their information, here is the breakdown of answers to the question about how they had heard of Legal Aid:

Referred by family or friend	3
Phone book	1

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

When asked what they would want to discuss if they had a chance to consult with a Legal Aid of Nebraska attorney, 12 participants cited issues connected with children. The answers ranged from issues concerning parent and grandparent rights (especially in cases where children are removed from the home by Child Protective Services), to child support, to ICWA. Other issues cited were education and general legal advice.

Focus Group: Grand Island, Neb., Rural Date: Sept. 12-14, 2006

Number of participants: 12

To gather the views of rural Nebraskans, the Bancroft office of Legal Aid of Nebraska distributed a questionnaire at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island Sept. 12-14, 2006. The questionnaire was based on the discussion outline used for the focus group discussions.

CHALLENGES

Every one of the respondents cited a financial issue of one kind or another regarding the biggest challenges faced by their families. A common theme was low prices for crops or cattle, high prices for production and pressures resulting from taxes, drought and inflation in the cost of things like medical care and insurance. Several respondents mentioned farm transition issues and concern about keeping a farm within a family. The questionnaire was distributed during a period of rapidly rising fuel prices, and a few respondents mentioned that as a challenge. Finding employment was mentioned once.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

Most of the factors cited as challenges also were cited as causes of poverty among this group. Also cited was low-wage employment, lack of employment fringe benefits, and high taxes.

AWARENESS

Eleven of the 12 respondents were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska before being invited to participate in this study. Below is the breakdown of answers to the question about how they had heard of Legal Aid. (Responses add to more than 12 because some individuals cited multiple sources).

Radio	7
Legal Aid clinics	2
Newspaper	2
Referral by family/friend	2
Magazine ad	1

Networking	1
Local Legal Aid office	1

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

Issues mentioned when participants were asked what Legal Aid of Nebraska could do to help them:

- Continue providing legal assistance at low rates (3 mentions)
- More seminars (2 mentions)
- Help lower taxes and insurance costs (2 mentions)
- Continue strong presence in rural Nebraska and provide information on hot topics in agriculture
- Help provide a group health plan
- Ease eligibility guideline

QUANTITATIVE FOCUS GROUP DATA SUMMARIES

City/Category/Number of participants	Needed a lawyer for non-criminal case? (Number saying "yes.") / How many saw a lawyer?	Needs Handled? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	Ever used Legal Aid of Nebraska? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	What services did Legal Aid provide?	How satisfied were you with Legal Aid services?	Why were you not satisfied?	Before learning about this focus group, how many were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska?
Scottsbluff/Hispanic/9	4 / 1	0	Issue was handled by participant after she was referred to the EOC.	3	Conflict of interest Failure to qualify financially. Afraid or intimidated.	Child support.	2 – Very Satisfied. 1 – Somewhat satisfied.		7
North Platte/Hispanic/16	5 / 1	1	Lawyer did nothing.	1	No need (seven mentions). Turned down (two mentions). Not eligible (two mentions).	Bankruptcy.	1 – Very satisfied.		5
Lincoln/Hispanic/11	2 / 0	0	NA	0 ¹	Never heard of Legal Aid of Nebraska (seven mentions)	NA	NA	NA	1
Omaha/Hispanic/9	0 / 0	NA		1	Not needed (eight mentions),	Immigration issue.	Somewhat satisfied.	NA	1

¹ – Two participants used Legal Aid services in other states, one in New York and one in Florida. Both were residency cases.

City/Category/Number of participants	Needed a lawyer for non-criminal case? (Number saying "yes.") / How many saw a lawyer?	Needs Handled? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	Ever used Legal Aid of Nebraska? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	What services did Legal Aid provide?	How satisfied were you with Legal Aid services?	Why were you not satisfied?	Before learning about this focus group, how many were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska?
Grand Island/Sudanese/22	7 / 3	0	Lack of clear explanations, language barrier.	0	Fundamentally unaware the service was available.	NA	NA	NA	3

City/Category/Number of participants	Needed a lawyer for non-criminal case? (Number saying "yes.") / How many saw a lawyer?	Needs Handled? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	Ever used Legal Aid of Nebraska? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	What services did Legal Aid provide?	How satisfied were you with Legal Aid services?	Why were you not satisfied?	Before learning about this focus group, how many were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska?
Omaha/African-American/6	5 / 5	2	Took other action (two mentions). Conflict of interest.	0	Was turned down for various reasons (four mentions). Never heard of the organization. No attorney needed.	NA	NA.	NA	5
Lincoln/African-American/10	1 / 0	0	Lawyer cited conflict of interest in child support case.	2	No need.	Divorce (two). Guardianship issue.	1- Very satisfied. 1 – Somewhat satisfied	"Somewhat satisfied" because client felt she had to do a lot of the legwork.	8

City/Category/Number of participants	Needed a lawyer for non-criminal case? (Number saying "yes.") / How many saw a lawyer?	Needs Handled? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	Ever used Legal Aid of Nebraska? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	What services did Legal Aid provide?	How satisfied were you with Legal Aid services?	Why were you not satisfied?	Before learning about this focus group, how many were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska?
South Sioux City/Native American/12	2 / 1	1	Lawyer's case load too heavy. No access to lawyer.	0	Not eligible (four mentions). Lack of Legal Aid funding. Handled case on own.	NA	NA.	NA	5
Lincoln/Native American/15	5 / 5	1	No expertise on matter at issue (Indian Child Welfare Act). Attorney died. Never contacted an attorney.	3	No need (11 mentions). Not eligible (two mentions).	Divorce. Adoption.	Very satisfied.	Unsatisfactory compromise reached.	8

City/Category/Number of participants	Needed a lawyer for non-criminal case? (Number saying "yes.") / How many saw a lawyer?	Needs Handled? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	Ever used Legal Aid of Nebraska? (Number saying "yes.")	If no, why not?	What services did Legal Aid provide?	How satisfied were you with Legal Aid services?	Why were you not satisfied?	Before learning about this focus group, how many were aware of Legal Aid of Nebraska?
Written survey distributed by Legal Aid of Nebraska's Bancroft office at Husker Harvest Days.	10 / 10	10	NA	7	Legal Aid didn't understand farm finance situation. Not eligible (two mentions). Unaware of it. No need.	Will and advice on water rights. Renter's rights and infringement on possession. Advice on debtor/creditor law, and seminar on farm finance. Farm clinic (two mentions). Farm transition advice. Risk management workshop. Farm project. Estate planning and clinic on farm issues. Financial consulting and estate planning.	9 – Very Satisfied. 1 – Somewhat satisfied.		11

VI. SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

PHASE I – TELEPHONE SURVEY

Hello, may I speak to the head of the household who is 18 years of age or older?
(If head of household is not available, ask when would be a good time to call back.
Thank and terminate.)

This is _____ calling for Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates. We are an opinion research firm conducting a survey about important issues you may be facing. Your number was selected at random. We want to hear your opinion about your true experiences. There are no right or wrong answers and all of your answers will be kept confidential.

A. How long have you lived in Nebraska?

_____ (number of years)

1. Please name three of the biggest challenges faced by your family?

2. Now, I am going to read you a list of challenges.

- Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)
- Domestic violence
- Divorce
- Child custody
- Child support
- Child care
- Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)
- Job training
- Employment
- Taxes
- Education
- Transportation
- Welfare/Benefits
- Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)
- Elder abuse (physical, financial)
- Alcohol/drug abuse
- Health care
- Business credit and financial issues

- Food/clothing
- Immigration status
- City/municipal services (garbage, abandoned building, unrepaired streets/sidewalks)
- School enrollment for children
- Wills/Trusts/Estate planning
- Guardianship
- Unemployment or worker's compensation
- Insurance

Did anything on this list change your decision of your top three challenges? If yes, which?

___ (1) Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)

___ (2) Domestic violence

___ (3) Divorce

___ (4) Child custody

___ (5) Child support

___ (6) Child care

___ (7) Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)

___ (8) Job training

___ (9) Employment

___ (10) Taxes

___ (11) Education

___ (12) Transportation

___ (13) Welfare/Benefits

___ (14) Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)

___ (15) Elder abuse (physical, financial)

___ (16) Alcohol/drug abuse

___ (17) Health care

___ (18) Business credit and financial issues

___ (19) Food/clothing

___ (20) Immigration status

___ (21) City/municipal services (garbage, abandoned building, unrepaired streets/sidewalks)

___ (22) School enrollment for children

___ (23) Wills/Trusts/Estate planning

___ (24) Guardianship

___ (25) Unemployment or worker's compensation

___ (26) Insurance

___ (27) Other

(specify)_____

3. Of the three biggest challenges you just mentioned, which is the biggest challenge? **(One response only.)**

____ (1) Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)

____ (2) Domestic violence

____ (3) Divorce

____ (4) Child custody

____ (5) Child support

____ (6) Child care

____ (7) Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)

____ (8) Job training

____ (9) Employment

____ (10) Taxes

____ (11) Education

____ (12) Transportation

____ (13) Welfare/Benefits

____ (14) Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)

____ (15) Elder abuse (physical, financial)

____ (16) Alcohol/drug abuse

____ (17) Health care

____ (18) Business credit and financial issues

____ (19) Food/clothing

____ (20) Immigration status

____ (21) City/municipal services (garbage, abandoned building, unrepaired streets/sidewalks)

____ (22) School enrollment for children

____ (23) Wills/Trusts/Estate planning

____ (24) Guardianship

____ (25) Unemployment or worker's compensation

____ (26) Insurance

____ (27) Other

(specify) _____

4. In the past year, have you needed a lawyer for something that did not include a crime?

____ (1) Yes

____ (2) No **(Skip to 9.)**

____ (3) Don't know **(Skip to 9.)**

5. How many times have you seen a lawyer for non-criminal legal problems in the past year?

- ____ (1) None
- ____ (2) One
- ____ (3) Two
- ____ (4) Three
- ____ (5) Four or more
- ____ (6) Other

(specify) _____

6. Were your non-criminal legal needs handled by the lawyer?

____ (1) Yes (**Skip to 9.**) (what organization/ person helped you?) _____

- ____ (2) No
- ____ (3) Don't know

7. How many times in the past year were your non-criminal legal needs not met?

- ____ (1) One
- ____ (2) Two
- ____ (3) Three
- ____ (4) Four or more

8. Why were your non-criminal needs not met by a lawyer? (**Do not read.**)

- ____ (1) A lawyer wouldn't have helped
- ____ (2) Lawyers are too expensive
- ____ (3) Handled it on my own
- ____ (4) Left the situation (moved)
- ____ (5) Took other action
- ____ (6) Situation was resolved
- ____ (7) Never got around to contacting a lawyer
- ____ (8) Other (specify)

9. Have you ever been placed on a waiting list when trying to get help from a free legal aid program?

- ____ (1) Yes (how long?) _____
- ____ (2) No

____ (3) Don't know

10. If you needed a lawyer in the future:

a. Are you aware of a service in your area that makes referrals to lawyers?

____ (1) Yes

____ (2) No

____ (3) Don't know

b. Are you aware of any free civil legal services for people who can't afford a lawyer?

____ (1) Yes

____ (2) No

____ (3) Don't know

c. Are you eligible for free legal services?

____ (1) Yes

____ (2) No (why

not?) _____

____ (3) Don't know

d. Are you aware of any mediation services in your area that work out an agreement between people involved in a dispute?

____ (1) Yes

____ (2) No

____ (3) Don't know

e. Are you aware of a small claims court where ordinary people can go to have their cases heard?

____ (1) Yes

____ (2) No

____ (3) Don't know

Legal Aid of Nebraska is a private non-profit organization that provides free non-criminal legal services to low-income persons.

11. Are you familiar with the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

____ (1) Yes

____ (2) No

____ (3) Don't know

12. Have you ever used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

____ (1) Yes **(Skip to 14.)**

____ (2) No

____ (3) Don't know

13. Why have you not ever used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska? **(Skip to 18.)**

____ (1) Handled the situation on my own

____ (2) Have never heard of the organization

____ (3) Was turned down by Legal Aid of Nebraska

____ (4) Didn't know I was eligible for services from the organization

____ (5) Didn't know it was free; thought it would be too expensive

____ (6) Afraid/intimidated

____ (7) Other

(specify) _____

____ (8) Don't know

14. When was the most recent time you used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

15. Which if any of the following services did Legal Aid of Nebraska provide to you most recently?

____ (1) Represented you or prepared for a hearing or lawsuit

____ (2) Intervened or represented you in a non-court dispute (wrote letter; negotiated)

____ (3) Represented you in non-adversary court situation

____ (4) Reviewed, prepared or filed legal documents

____ (5) Worked for change in laws, rules or regulations

____ (6) Provided you legal advice

____ (7) Other

(specify) _____

____ (8) Don't know

____ (9) Refused

16. How satisfied were you with the most recent services you received from Legal Aid of Nebraska?

____ (1) Very satisfied **(Skip to 18.)**

- ____ (2) Somewhat satisfied **(Skip to 18.)**
____ (3) Not very satisfied
____ (4) Not at all satisfied

17. Why were you not satisfied with the services you received? **(Do not read.)**

- ____ (1) Lawyer did not explain things to me
____ (2) The lawyer was not honest in dealings with me
____ (3) Lawyer did not keep me well-informed
____ (4) Unable to get need met; lost case, etc.
____ (5) Unsatisfactory compromise reached
____ (6) Situation has gotten worse
____ (7) No change and (still) unhappy with it
____ (8) Other

(specify) _____

- ____ (9) Don't know/Can't recall **(Go to 19.)**

18. What, if anything, could Legal Aid of Nebraska have done differently to assist you?

—

—

—

19. For classification purposes, in which of the following age groups are you? **(Read.)**

- ____ (1) 18-24
____ (2) 25-34
____ (3) 35-44
____ (4) 45-54
____ (5) 55-64
____ (6) 65 and over
____ (7) Refused **(Do not read.)**

20. What is your current marital status? Are you:

- ____ (1) Married

- ____ (2) Living with a partner
- ____ (3) Separated
- ____ (4) Divorced
- ____ (5) Widowed
- ____ (6) Never been married
- ____ (7) Other

(specify?) _____

- ____ (8) Refused (**Do not read.**)

21. What is the highest grade in school that you have completed?

- ____ (1) None
- ____ (2) Elementary school
- ____ (3) High school
- ____ (4) College
- ____ (5) Graduate/professional school
- ____ (6) Other

(specify) _____

- ____ (7) Refused (**Do not read.**)

22. Which of the following statements best describes your current work situation? Are you:

- ____ (1) Working full-time (35 hours or more per week)
- ____ (2) Working part-time (less than 34 hours per week)
- ____ (3) Unemployed or laid off and looking for work
- ____ (4) Unemployed or laid off and not looking for work
- ____ (5) Retired
- ____ (6) Disabled and unable to work
- ____ (7) In school
- ____ (8) A homemaker
- ____ (9) Other

(specify) _____

- ____ (10) Refused (**Do not read.**)

23. Is the home in which you are living:

- ____ (1) Owned with a mortgage or loan
- ____ (2) Owned free and clear, without a mortgage or loan
- ____ (3) Rented
- ____ (4) Occupied without payment of rent

____ (5) Other
(specify) _____
____ (6) Refused **(Do not read.)**

24. Do you live in public housing, live in housing paid for or run by a government agency, or do you get help with the rent from a government program like Section 8?

- ____ (1) Yes
____ (2) No
____ (3) Don't know
____ (4) Refused

25. How many children do you have living in your household under the age of 18?

- ____ (1) None
____ (2) One
____ (3) Two
____ (4) Three
____ (5) Four or more
____ (6) Refused **(Do not read.)**

26. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? **(Read.)**

- ____ (1) Caucasian (white)
____ (2) African American (black)
____ (3) Native American
____ (4) Hispanic
____ (5) Other

(specify) _____
____ (6) Refused **(Do not read.)**

27. Respondent gender **(Do not ask - record only)**

- ____ (1) Male
____ (2) Female

These are all the questions I have. Thank you very much for your time.

PHASE II – WRITTEN SURVEY

Board/Staff

Legal Aid of Nebraska (a private, nonprofit law firm) is currently assessing the legal needs of low-income Nebraska residents. As a staff member of a Legal Aid provider, you are being asked to complete the following survey. Your input is very important. Please return the completed survey by April 15, 2006, in the self addressed/stamped envelope to Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates, 11915 P Street, Suite 100, Omaha, NE 68137. Thank you.

Provider

Name: _____

1. In which of the following Legal Aid of Nebraska offices are you located? (**check one please**)

- ____ (1) Bancroft
- ____ (2) Grand Island
- ____ (3) Lincoln
- ____ (4) Norfolk
- ____ (5) North Platte
- ____ (6) Omaha
- ____ (7) Scottsbluff

2. In your opinion, what are the three most critical needs (civil legal services) for your clients that are not currently being met?

—

—

—

3. What are the three greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your office?

—

-
4. What are the three greatest weaknesses of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your office?
- _____
-
- _____
-
- _____
-
5. In your opinion, on what services or areas of concern should Legal Aid of Nebraska focus if resources are limited?
- _____
-
- _____
-
- _____
-
6. How would you describe the delivery of legal services to your clients?
- ____ (1) Prompt and reliable
- ____ (2) Slow and reliable
- ____ (3) Reliable
- ____ (4) Slow and unreliable
- ____ (5) Other (please specify) _____
7. Based on what you know about Legal Aid of Nebraska, would you say the firm is adequately funded?
- ____ (1) Yes
- (why?) _____
- ____ (2) No
- (why?) _____
- ____ (3) Don't know
8. Overall, how would you describe your firm's performance and effectiveness as a legal services provider in meeting the needs of your clients?
- _____

—

—

—

Thank you for your time!

Judge

Legal Aid of Nebraska (a private, nonprofit law firm) provides access to civil legal services for low-income Nebraskans who qualify according to federal poverty guidelines. The firm is dedicated to promoting dignity, hope, self-sufficiency and justice through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn. Legal Aid is currently assessing the legal needs of low-income Nebraska residents. As a stakeholder in the field of legal services, you are being asked to complete the following survey. Your input is very important. Please return the completed survey by April 15, 2006, in the self addressed/stamped envelope to Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates, 11915 P Street, Suite 100, Omaha, NE 68137. Thank you.

1. Which of the following Legal Aid of Nebraska offices is nearest to you? **(check one please)**

- ____ (1) Bancroft
- ____ (2) Grand Island
- ____ (3) Lincoln
- ____ (4) Norfolk
- ____ (5) North Platte
- ____ (6) Omaha
- ____ (7) Scottsbluff

2. In your opinion, what are the three most critical needs (civil legal services) among Nebraska residents who qualify, according to federal poverty guidelines, for Legal Aid services?

—

—

—

3. In your opinion, are these civil legal needs being met?

- ____ (1) Yes
(how?) _____
- ____ (2) No
(why?) _____

4. Please check what, in your view, are the three biggest challenges (other than legal services)

faced by residents of Nebraska who qualify for Legal Aid services.

- ____ (1) Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)
- ____ (2) Domestic violence
- ____ (3) Divorce
- ____ (4) Child custody
- ____ (5) Child support
- ____ (6) Child care
- ____ (7) Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)
- ____ (8) Job training
- ____ (9) Employment
- ____ (10) Taxes
- ____ (11) Education
- ____ (12) Transportation
- ____ (13) Welfare/Benefits
- ____ (14) Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)
- ____ (15) Elder abuse (physical, financial)
- ____ (16) Alcohol/drug abuse
- ____ (17) Health care
- ____ (18) Business credit and financial issues
- ____ (19) Food/clothing
- ____ (20) Immigration status
- ____ (21) City/municipal services (garbage, abandoned building, unrepaired streets/sidewalks)
- ____ (22) School enrollment for children
- ____ (23) Wills/Trusts/Estate planning
- ____ (24) Guardianship
- ____ (25) Unemployment or worker's compensation
- ____ (26) Insurance
- ____ (27) Other

(specify)_____

5. What are the three greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

—

—

6. What are the three greatest weaknesses of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

—

—

—

7. In your opinion, on what services or areas of concern should Legal Aid of Nebraska focus if resources are limited?

—

—

—

8. Based on what you know about Legal Aid of Nebraska, would you say the firm is adequately funded?

____ (1) Yes

(why?) _____

____ (2) No

(why?) _____

____ (3) Don't know

Thank you for your time!

Attorney

Legal Aid of Nebraska (a private, nonprofit law firm) provides access to civil legal services for low-income Nebraskans who qualify according to federal poverty guidelines. The firm is dedicated to promoting dignity, hope, self-sufficiency and justice through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn. Legal Aid is currently assessing the legal needs of low-income Nebraska residents. As a stakeholder in the field of legal services, you are being asked to complete the following survey. Your input is very important. Please return the completed survey by April 15, 2006, in the self addressed/stamped envelope to Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates, 11915 P Street, Suite 100, Omaha, NE 68137. Thank you.

Name of

Firm: _____

1. Which of the following Legal Aid of Nebraska offices is nearest to you? (**check one please**)

- ____ (1) Bancroft
- ____ (2) Grand Island
- ____ (3) Lincoln
- ____ (4) Norfolk
- ____ (5) North Platte
- ____ (6) Omaha
- ____ (7) Scottsbluff

2. In your opinion, what are the three most critical needs (civil legal services) among Nebraska residents who qualify, according to federal poverty guidelines, for Legal Aid services?

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3. In your opinion, are these civil legal needs being met?

- ____ (1) Yes
- (how?) _____
- ____ (2) No

(why?) _____

4. Please check what, in your view, are the three biggest challenges (other than legal services) faced by residents of Nebraska who qualify for Legal Aid services.

- ____ (1) Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)
- ____ (2) Domestic violence
- ____ (3) Divorce
- ____ (4) Child custody
- ____ (5) Child support
- ____ (6) Child care
- ____ (7) Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)
- ____ (8) Job training
- ____ (9) Employment
- ____ (10) Taxes
- ____ (11) Education
- ____ (12) Transportation
- ____ (13) Welfare/Benefits
- ____ (14) Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)
- ____ (15) Elder abuse (physical, financial)
- ____ (16) Alcohol/drug abuse
- ____ (17) Health care
- ____ (18) Business credit and financial issues
- ____ (19) Food/clothing
- ____ (20) Immigration status
- ____ (21) City/municipal services (garbage, abandoned building, unrepaired streets/sidewalks)
- ____ (22) School enrollment for children
- ____ (23) Wills/Trusts/Estate planning
- ____ (24) Guardianship
- ____ (25) Unemployment or worker's compensation
- ____ (26) Insurance
- ____ (27) Other

(specify) _____

5. What are the three greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

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6. What are the three greatest weaknesses of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

7. In your opinion, on what services or areas of concern should Legal Aid of Nebraska focus if resources are limited?

8. Based on what you know about Legal Aid of Nebraska, would you say the firm is adequately funded?

____ (1) Yes

(why?) _____

____ (2) No

(why?) _____

____ (3) Don't know

Thank you for your time!

Human Services Provider

Legal Aid of Nebraska (a private, nonprofit law firm) provides access to civil legal services for low-income Nebraska residents who qualify according to federal poverty guidelines. The firm is dedicated to promoting dignity, hope, self-sufficiency and justice through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn. Legal Aid is currently assessing the legal needs of low-income Nebraska residents. As a provider of human services, you are being asked to complete the following survey. Your input is very important. Please return the completed survey by April 15, 2006, in the self addressed/stamped envelope to Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates, 11915 P Street, Suite 100, Omaha, NE 68137. Thank you.

Name of

Organization: _____

1. Which of the following Legal Aid of Nebraska offices is nearest to you? **(check one please)**

- ____ (1) Bancroft
- ____ (2) Grand Island
- ____ (3) Lincoln
- ____ (4) Norfolk
- ____ (5) North Platte
- ____ (6) Omaha
- ____ (7) Scottsbluff

2. Please indicate the primary population your organization serves. **(Check all that apply.)**

- ____ (1) Seniors
- ____ (2) Youth
- ____ (3) Women
- ____ (4) Men
- ____ (5) Families (low-income)
- ____ (6) Students
- ____ (7) Persons with disabilities
- ____ (8) Family (special needs)
- ____ (9) Ethnic/Racial/Cultural groups
- ____ (10) Other (please

specify) _____

3. What is the primary age of the consumers served by your organization?

- ____ (1) 17 and under
- ____ (2) 18-24
- ____ (3) 25-34
- ____ (4) 35-50
- ____ (5) 51-60
- ____ (6) 60 or older

4. What are the types of direct or indirect services provided by your organization? (**Check all that apply.**)

- ____ (1) Case management
- ____ (2) Education assistance
- ____ (3) Employment assistance
- ____ (4) Family support
- ____ (5) Financial assistance
- ____ (6) Counseling services
- ____ (7) Legal services
- ____ (8) Information and referral
- ____ (9) Discrimination assistance
- ____ (10) Emergency services (housing, food, clothing)
- ____ (11) Housing
- ____ (12) Health care
- ____ (13) Job training
- ____ (14) Child care (including Head Start)
- ____ (15) Transportation
- ____ (16) Recreation
- ____ (17) Government program for the poor
- ____ (18) Other (please

specify)_____

5. In your opinion, what are the three most critical needs (civil legal services) of your clients who qualify, according to federal poverty guidelines, for Legal Aid services?

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6. In your opinion, are these civil legal needs being met?

____ (1) Yes

(how?) _____

____ (2) No

(why?) _____

7. Please check what, in your view, are the three biggest challenges (other than legal services) faced by your clients who qualify for Legal Aid services.

____ (1) Housing (landlord/tenant, unsafe conditions, paying rent, paying utilities)

____ (2) Domestic violence

____ (3) Divorce

____ (4) Child custody

____ (5) Child support

____ (6) Child care

____ (7) Personal finance (creditors, bankruptcy, inability to obtain credit)

____ (8) Job training

____ (9) Employment

____ (10) Taxes

____ (11) Education

____ (12) Transportation

____ (13) Welfare/Benefits

____ (14) Discrimination (age, race, sex, disability)

____ (15) Elder abuse (physical, financial)

____ (16) Alcohol/drug abuse

____ (17) Health care

____ (18) Business credit and financial issues

____ (19) Food/clothing

____ (20) Immigration status

____ (21) City/municipal services (garbage, abandoned building, unrepaired streets/sidewalks)

____ (22) School enrollment for children

____ (23) Wills/Trusts/Estate planning

____ (24) Guardianship

____ (25) Unemployment or worker's compensation

____ (26) Insurance

____ (27) Other

(specify) _____

8. In the past year, have you referred any of your clients to Legal Aid of Nebraska for legal services?

____ (1) Yes (how many?)_____

____ (2) No
(why?)_____

9. To your knowledge, were your clients' legal needs met?

____ (1) Yes

____ (2) No

(why?)_____

____ (3) Don't know

10. What are the three greatest assets/strengths of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

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11. What are the three greatest weaknesses of the Legal Aid of Nebraska firm in your area?

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12. In your opinion, on what services or areas of concern should Legal Aid of Nebraska focus if resources are limited?

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13. Based on what you know about Legal Aid of Nebraska, would you say the firm is adequately funded?

_____ (1) Yes

(why?)_____

_____ (2) No

(why?)_____

_____ (3) Don't know

Thank you for your time!

PHASE III – FOCUS GROUPS

Discussion Outline

The following outline was used as a guide for each of the focus group discussions. In the case of the rural Nebraskans group, a written questionnaire was adapted from this outline.

I. Introduction.

A. Self-introduction.

1. I'm _____ with Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates. We are doing some research about important issues you and your family may be facing. Tonight we are talking to _____, and that is why you were invited to participate.

2. Thanks. I appreciate you coming to meet with us and give us your opinions.

3. What we want to accomplish. What we want to learn from you tonight is what challenges you are facing and information about your experiences with Legal Aid of Nebraska. The overall objective is to hear your views. Keep in mind as we talk that this is meant to be a constructive discussion.

4. How it works. I am going to ask you a few questions. I ask questions, you tell me what you think. It's just that simple.

B. Ground rules.

1. Relax. There are no right or wrong answers. You are here to give your opinions. Everyone's opinions are valuable.

2. Be honest. It is very important that you feel free to say what YOU think. You do not have to worry about offending us.

Also, disagreement among yourselves is perfectly acceptable. You may see things quite differently than the person sitting next to you or across from you. I want to hear about YOUR individual opinions. If they agree with other members of the group, that's fine. If they do not

agree, that's fine, too.

3. Give everyone a chance to speak.

C. Taping.

1. The session will be recorded so that I can prepare a report

2. Please speak up.

3. Avoid side conversations; don't all speak at once.

D. Introduction of participants.

E. Discussion.

1. Please name the biggest challenges faced by your family.

Probes:

- Housing
- Employment
- Health care
- Immigration status
- Food/clothing
- Divorce
- Domestic relations
- Child custody/Child support

2. What are the fundamental causes of poverty in your area?

Probes

- Lack of education
- Employment/region's economy
- Consumption/consumerism (debt)
- Living costs

FOLLOW-UP: What can be done to address these challenges and causes?

3. In the past year, have any of you needed a lawyer for something that did not include a crime? If yes, how many times have you seen a lawyer for non-criminal legal problems in the past year?

Probes:

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four or more

4. Were your non-criminal legal needs handled by the lawyer? If no, why were they not met?

Probes:

- A lawyer wouldn't have helped
- Lawyer are too expensive
- I handled the issue on my own
- I moved
- I took other action
- The situation was resolved
- Never contacted a lawyer

5. Now, I'd like to talk specifically about Legal Aid of Nebraska, a private non-profit organization that provides free non-criminal legal services to low-income persons. Have you ever used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska? If no, why have you not used the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

Probes:

- Handled the situation on my own
- Have never heard of the organization
- Was turned down by Legal Aid of Nebraska
- Am not eligible for services from the organization
- Didn't know it was free; thought it would be too expensive
- Afraid/intimidated

6. If yes, what services did Legal Aid of Nebraska provide to you most recently?

Probes:

- Called the AccessLine
- Represented me or prepared me for a hearing or lawsuit
- Intervened or represented me in a non-court dispute (wrote letter, negotiated)
- Represented me in non-adversary court situation
- Reviewed, prepared or filed legal documents
- Worked for change in laws, rules or regulations
- Provided me with legal advice

7. How satisfied were you with the most recent service you received from Legal Aid of Nebraska?

Probes:

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

8. Why were you not satisfied with the services you received?

Probes:

- Lawyer did not explain things to me
- The lawyer was not honest in dealings with me
- Lawyer did not keep me well-informed
- Unable to get need met; lost case, etc.
- Unsatisfactory compromise reached
- Situation has gotten worse
- No change and still unhappy with it

9. How did you hear about the services of Legal Aid of Nebraska?

Probes:

- Phone book
- Referral from family, friend
- Referral from attorney, court, police
- Referral from human services agency

- Web site
- News media mention

10. What can Legal Aid of Nebraska do, if anything, to address these challenges and causes of poverty in this area.

II. Conclusion.

A. What, if anything, could Legal Aid of Nebraska do to assist you? (Imagine that you have a one-hour consultation with a Legal Aid attorney tomorrow morning. What issue would you want to discuss?)

B. Anything else to add?

C. Thank you for your time and participation.